CHRIST and LIFE

ROBERT E. SPEER

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by

ROBERT E. SPEER

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PREFACE

THE chapters which compose this little book appeared originally as articles in the religious papers. Twelve of them were published as a series in *Forward;* six as editorials in *The Sunday School Times;* three appeared in *The Congregationalist,* and the others in *The Churchman* and *The Intercollegian.* They are reprinted with the kind consent of the editors of these publications, and in the hope that the plain and simple views of Christian duty which they set forth may be helpful to some who are striving to subject their life wholly to Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Christ and Life

I

JESUS CHRIST, OUR LORD

We begin our Christian life by abandoning ourselves to Christ. What we can not do for ourselves we find He can do for us. What we can not be in ourselves we find He can be in us. So we agree to let Him do for us and be in us what we can not do for ourselves, or be in ourselves. The principle that we thus recognise and establish at the beginning of our Christian life is to be our principle to the end. Christ takes the place of self. At the beginning He destroys self in us that He may give self back to us in Himself. This was His promise: "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it." This is the

joy and surprise of our new life in Christ. He tells us to give up our life to Him. We give it, and lo, we receive it back again richer, better, more glorious.

So it must be with us always. As we begin, we must go on, yielding all to Christ, recognising Christ as the owner of all. And as at the first, so always we shall discover that He will give us back, enriched and blessed, all that we have acknowledged as belonging not to ourselves, but to Him.

So it is not contradictory to begin any discussion of the relation of our life to Christ, with the statement that we are not to have any life of our own, and that, therefore, we must not have any concern about our life. We are to recognise, with all true Christians, that our life belongs not to ourselves, but to Christ, in whom our life will belong to us more truly than ever before. This is the blessed mystery of yielding everything to Christ,—that we find that we have received everything back in Christ. This is the helpful lesson of surrender.

"Laid on Thine altar, O my Lord divine,
Accept this gift to-day, for Jesus' sake.
I have no jewels to adorn Thy shrine,
Nor any world-famed sacrifice to make;
But here I bring within my trembling hand,
This will of mine, a thing that seemeth small—
And Thou alone, O Lord, canst understand
How when I yield Thee this I yield mine all.

"Hidden therein Thy searching gaze can see
Struggles of passion, visions of delight;
All that I have, or am, or fain would be;
Deep loves, fond hopes, and longings infinite;
It hath been wet with tears and dimm'd with sighs,
Clenched in my grasp till beauty hath it none!
Now from Thy footstool, where it vanquished lies,
The prayer ascendeth—May Thy will be done!

"Take it, O Father, ere my courage fail,
And merge it so in Thine own will, that e'en
If in some desperate hour my cries prevail,
And Thou give back my gift, it may have been

So changed, so purified, so fair have grown,
So one with Thee, so filled with peace divine,
I may not know or feel it as mine own,
But gaining back my will may find it Thine."

Our personal life must rest firmly on this recognition of Jesus Christ as Lord of life. Each one must learn to say truthfully for himself, what Paul says for all: "I am not my own. I belong to Christ." We do not know the real meaning or joy of life until we have said this. The very reality of life is that community of living with some other life whose influence has worked upon us "as saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones, and all," which enables us to say, "I am thine, beloved," and to hear in return, "Beloved, I am thine." "My beloved is mine, and I am His," is the final secret of all things. This truth of the utter ownership of Jesus is to be the starting point and the goal of all true life among Christ's disciples, young and old.

Two things become clear at once when

Jesus is thus recognised as proprietor of our personal life. One is that all that we have, life, time, talent, possession, is committed to us as a trust from Jesus, not to be used selfishly for ourselves, but unselfishly for Christ and for others. The other is that Jesus is our absolute Lord, our King, our unqualified Emperor. It will be our zeal to exalt Him, to claim for Him first place in other lives, and to yield Him preëminence in our own.

Now, many blessed consequences flow from this acknowledgment of the ownership of Jesus. First of all, Jesus becomes responsible for us, for our place in life, and for our conduct in life. He will be concerned to see that the life which He owns finds the place in which He wishes it to be. We perplex ourselves often about the will of God. "If I only knew what God wants me to do!" we exclaim. But if we belong to Christ we may be sure that He is more anxious to have us in His place for us even than we can be to be there, and that He will get us into that

place if He can. And Jesus becomes responsible for our conduct also. What we do of evil or shame casts reproach on Him. The very thought of it makes a shameful or evil act intolerable. Jesus Himself in us puts forth all His power to prevent what He disapproves. Our owner will cease to take care of His own only when we compel Him to do so by ceasing to be His own. Major Whittle used to tell of a negro slave who knew this secret and was wont to pray in the hour of temptation, "Massa, take cah; yo' propehty is in dangeh!"

With the life that has yielded all to Jesus, Jesus shares all his life. This was what Jesus taught in the parable of the Good Shepherd. "I know Mine own, and Mine own know Me. My sheep follow Me, a stranger will they not follow, and I give unto them eternal life. And I lay down My life for the sheep." He asks no more than He gives; that is, all of us for Himself, and all of Himself to us. Kingsley has retold, as true, a story of two monks of one of the earlier cen-

turies who lived together in a cave for years in closest love. At last one suggested to the other that they should have a quarrel, after the way of the world.

"How?" asked his friend.

"Well, we'll take this stone and lay it down between us, and I will say, 'This stone is mine!' And you can say, 'No; this stone is mine!' and so we will quarrel."

So they placed the stone between them, and the first man said, "This stone is mine." The second man replied, hesitantly, "I—I think—the stone is mine."

"Well," replied the man who had proposed the quarrel, "if the stone is thine, take it."

Where two lives belong to each other, all that each possesses is the other's. When we say, "O Christ, I am Thine," He replies, "O friend, I am thine." Our personal life is the possession of Christ and of all that is Christ's.

Jesus is like us in this particular, in the matter of His property—He likes to have it near Him. "Father," He said in His

great prayer, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me, where I am." This is the only time Jesus asserted His own will, and that will was that He and His own might never be separated. "If any man serve me," He told His disciples, "let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be." We do not do wrong in praying for His presence, but we cannot escape from His presence. Where we go, He goes. Where He is, we are. And the secret of noble character is in this: "We all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit." To associate with Him, as we must if we are His, is to come to resemble Him.

Life becomes very simple and real under this conception of Christ's ownership. The problems of life cease to be impersonal questions of principle or duty. We do not ask any more, "What ought I to do?" We ask, "What would He have me do?"

"Evermore beside me on my way
The unseen Christ doth move,
That I may lean upon His arm and say,
Dear Lord, dost Thou approve?"

He is the present Lord of life, and waits to be asked regarding each detail, and is ready with certain guidance and help. As the "Act of Faith" declares, "I believe on the name of the Son of God. Therefore, I am in Him, having redemption through His blood and life by His Spirit. And He is in me, and all fullness is in Him. To Him I belong by purchase, conquest, and self-surrender; to me He belongs for all my hourly needs. There is no difficulty inward or outward that He is not ready to meet in me to-day. The Lord is my keeper. Amen."

But it is not alone our personal life in its relation to Christ that is affected by His lordship over us. Belonging to Christ, we sustain a new relationship to all who are Christ's. Among all who are sons of God in Christ Jesus, Paul says, "There can be neither Jew nor

Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus." Dr. Arthur Mitchell illustrated this truth of the union of a man with his fellows because united with Christ, when as a boy in Williams College he resigned, at his conversion, from the secret society of which he was a member. As a friend wrote, "The tie was 'artificial,' he said, and weakened the broader one of humanity." He belonged now to Christ, and he would not cheapen that tie with all who were Christ's by establishing any other "artificial" tie. He was Christ's and all of his relationships must be Christ's also.

As Lord of our life Jesus must be Lord of all that is in our life. Of course, He must be recognised as Lord over all that appears to others and by which they form their judgment of us. Over all outer acts, habits, and words, Jesus must be admittedly and openly Master. And surely over all that is within He must be

Lord. That would be a pitiful hypocrisy which proclaimed Him Lord over the outer life and kept the real life within from His sovereign control. Thoughts, feelings, tastes, imaginations, longings, ideals, judgments—all these are to be under the rule of Christ. Yet His bondage is perfect liberty and life. Only as we put on His chains are we free. He delivers us from the lower slavery to the emancipated life.

This is the first truth of all, that we are not our own, but Christ's. The whole life of the Christian rests on this, and if we will not assent to it, we can not go on to discover and possess the treasures of the life that is deep and true. We can not truly rest anywhere else; for Christ's we are, whether we admit it or not. It is simply a question whether we will recognise His ownership with love and loyalty, or live in insurrection and faithlessness. Let us begin by joyfully admitting, as our blessed and absolute Lord, Him who redeemed us, not with corrupti-

ble things, such as silver and gold, but with His own precious blood. A rich, personal Christian life begins in this confession, made in full and sincere surrender, " Jesus Christ, my Lord."

II

RELIGION NOT A MATTER OF TEMPERAMENT

THERE are many people who are of the opinion that they do not possess the religious temperament. Some deplore this. Religion, with its life and moods, its opinions and experiences, is a difficult thing to them. They are discouraged at its difficulty, and blame themselves for their lack of a spiritual disposition. Or they excuse themselves for the shortcomings of which they are sensible by the reflection that something is wanting in their nature. There are others who do not deplore their want, but rather exult in it. It is a matter of pride to them that they do not feel the sense of reverence, which they call supersition, or the sense of dependence, which they call fear.

Among earnest Christians, even, this

sense of subjection to the limitations of disposition is constantly found. Says one, "I wish I could enjoy the peace and blessing of the deeper Christian experience. I have tried to gain them, but it is not my temperament." Says another, "I try to love the Saviour, but I am not emotional, and my imagination will not help me, and I can not feel that He is with me. I wish I could experience the thrills of devotion which some seem to feel, but I can not." "I do my duty as duty," says a third, "but that is all. I work for Christ as His servant, not His friend."

And even where the heart and mind seem just fitted for divine fellowship and the whole experience and service of religion, there are times when, through physical weariness or sickness or distraction, the religious disposition suffers collapse, and the heart sighs with disappointment, "If only my feelings were steady and safe from distress, and could rest always peacefully in Christ!"

Now all this habit of thought, so com-

mon and so natural, proceeds upon the mistaken supposition that religion is a matter of the disposition. It is not so. Many a man of spiritual temperament is in prison for crime, and many a man of dull and sluggish religious disposition is in the kingdom of God. A Hindu so-called "prince" has been in America recently, raising money for the declared purpose of providing wells for the Pariahs in the Madras Presidency. He has received thousands of dollars from devoted people who have been impressed with his noble religious earnestness. Religion seemed so natural in him as to raise him above suspicion. But he was an unworthy and irreligious man. A temperament which made religious protestation easy to him covered over what was essentially irreligious and dishonest.

Perhaps worship and devotion are easy to us. Perhaps they are difficult. It matters comparatively little to Christ. What He esteems is not our disposition, but our will. If the will is vicious or

untamed or selfish, smoothness or tearfulness of disposition are but repugnant to Him. If the will is true and sincere, and bent toward His obedience, even a rough and unemotional temperament will not dismay Him. It is easier working through the will to alter the disposition than working through the disposition to alter the will.

Jesus lays His emphasis, accordingly, elsewhere than on the temperament: "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God." It is not a matter of natural disposition, but of volition, of deliberate choice. We do not come to faith by any emotional fitness for it, but by the will of obedience. If faith resided in the emotional disposition, doubt would reside there too. But Jesus will not allow either.

"For Thou art so far that I often doubt,
As I stretch forth my hands in prayer,
Searching within and looking without,
If Thou art anywhere.

. . . . . .

"But He said that they who *did* His word
The truth of it should know,
I will try to do it. If He be Lord,
Perhaps the old spring will flow.

"Perhaps the old spirit wind will blow
That He promised to their prayer;
And, doing Thy will, I yet may know
Thee, Father, everywhere."

So, also, in His new commandment, Jesus does not hang everything upon the inclination to love. He bids the disciples to love. Love, like faith, is not a caprice of disposition. It is an attitude of will, personality melted into service.

Our dispositions cannot hurt our wills. "There is no evil," says Kant, "but the evil will." But our wills can hurt or help our dispositions. If we will to love, we shall become loving. If we will to treat tenderly, we shall become tender. If our wills are false and dishonorable, no matter how even and fair our disposition, it must become corroded by the evil power within. And if our wills are right, our passions and affections and moods will become right also.

It makes a great deal of difference whether our religion is a religion of the disposition or a religion of the will. If the former, it will have its ups and downs; if the latter, neither variableness nor shadow of turning. Our moods change from day to day, but the eternal realities of the infinite love and life are the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. And the will of trust, of faith, of obedience, once set toward them, is unalterably kept by the will of God in steadfastness and serenity.

Jesus gives less heed, accordingly, to the emotional instincts, the temperamental moods of men, than to the underlying cast of character and bent of will. If these are right, He who regenerates the will can regenerate the disposition also. In one of his great sermons Bushnell shows this,—how "Christ Regenerates even the Desires," the positive cravings, the wild wishes, the vagrant longings, new-molding them in their spring, and configuring them inwardly to God, regenerating the soul at this deepest

and most hidden point of character. This is a real renewal of the will.

No privilege of the spiritual life is denied to any of us because of our disposition. "That good part" was Mary's, not because her temperament differed from Martha's, but because she chose it. God's invitations are exceeding broad, as broad as the choices, not as narrow as the caprices of men. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." "He that is athirst let him come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." No temperamental limitations narrow the gates of the kingdom or hedge the way to perfect satisfaction of the deepest thirst of the soul.

And, finally, duty cannot be stated in terms of temperamental religion. All that that sort of religion has to say is, "I feel like it," or, "I don't feel like it." But duty is above the disposition to

do it. It speaks with an authority that will not endure the whims of mood. It has its roots in the will of God, and its flower in the will of God's child. Each of us can find in it full poise of spirit and calm of heart, whatever our temperament may be.

III

THE PLACE OF PRAYER

THERE are some practices of the Christian life which, all agree, are indispensable. Whenever anyone thinks or speaks of the maintenance of the spiritual life these exercises stand out prominently. Prayer is one of them. It is a part of all public worship. Its place is always recognised. Yet, as a simple matter of fact, it is one of the most neglected things in the Church and in the life of Christians. There are perhaps not a few of us who talk more about prayer than we pray. This would be less true if we believed more in the reality of prayer and were willing to go to school to learn how to pray.

No one can read the Bible without recognising that the Bible regards prayer as a real power. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive,"

says Jesus. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick," says James, and adds, "Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." James v: 15, 17, 18. "And this is the boldness which we have toward Him," wrote John, "that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petition which we have asked of Him." 1 John v: 14, 15. "Prayer is," as Austin Phelps says, "a power, has a power, not subjective merely. So any unperverted mind will conceive of the scriptural idea of prayer as that of one of the most downright, sturdy realities of the universe. Right in the heart of God's plan of government it is lodged as a power. Amidst the conflicts which are going on in the evolution of that plan it stands as a power. Into all the intricacies of di-

vine working and the mysteries of divine decrees it reaches out silently as a power. In the mind of God, we may be assured, the conception of prayer is no fiction, whatever men may think of it."

Perhaps when we first became Christians we felt this. God did seem to be listening then, and we believed we were in His presence. But as we went on the glory died away, and we seemed to be but speaking aimlessly into the air. But neither were we mistaken in our glad new faith nor has God changed.

"Not through Thy fault, O Holy One, we lose Thee."

We have simply failed to go on from our first lessons to the new lessons required for an enlarging life.

For prayer is as much a matter of schooling as Bible study or other spiritual growth. The disciples knew that it was not a chance thing, but an education; and they came to Jesus, saying, "Lord, teach us to pray." We may be sure both from what we know of Him, and what we see

in their later lives, that Jesus began the class and taught them as He is willing now to teach us, if we wish to learn.

The first thing is to enter truly Christ's school; that is, the school in which He is the Teacher and where the scholars learn of Him. Look at His life and ways of prayer. He prayed without ceasing. He prepared for the crises and duties of life by prayer. The great events of His life and the outgoings of power were preceded by prayer. The people connected His prayers with helpful influences and brought little children to Him "that He should lay His hands on them, and pray." Matt. xix: 13. The choice of the Twelve and the Sermon on the Mount were preceded by a night of prayer. Luke vi: 12, 13. The transfiguration was a phenomenon of prayer. Luke ix: 28-36.

Such prayers of anticipation are common. Facing a great crisis, men turn instinctively to a power without themselves, desiring help against the hour of need. When the crisis is past, they lean once more contentedly upon their own strength

and discernment. Jesus, however, followed the great events of His life by prayer, and the sorrows of His life were met in prayer.

Much of His prayer was for others than Himself. Such was His confidence in His prayers that He even gave thanks publicly for God's goodness in hearing Him before any answer had come. John xi: 41, 42. His prayers were as simple, too, as those of a child (Matt. xi: 25-27; John xi: 41, 42; Luke xxiii: 34, 46), and as submissive, wholly free from all self-will and pride. Matt. xi: 26; 26: 39, 42, 54.

The busier He was the more earnestly He seems to have given Himself to prayer (Mark i: 35; Luke iv: 42; John vi: 15); but He was ready at any time to forego for the sake of service the privilege of silence and communion which He so greatly prized. Matt. xiv: 14.

And all this prayer life of Jesus was so natural and true. God was not a God afar off to Him. We never hear Him addressing God as "Almighty God," a

phrase found in the New Testament only in the book of The Revelation. He always calls Him Father, and speaks to Him as to one who is near at hand. In the midst of a crowd He talks to Him as naturally as in solitude. Matt. xi: 25, 26; John xii: 27; Luke xxiii: 46.

Now of course Jesus was such a man of prayer, not just to set us an example of a life of prayer, but because He was Himself. Yet He was Himself that we might be like Him, and we can not be in His school and not learn from Him to pray as He prayed. But looking at Him will not in itself accomplish this education. We must practice what we see in Him, and one of the best places to begin this is in intercessory prayer. "Simon, Simon," He told Peter, "behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not." Jesus knew that the evil one would try the little band of apostles. He knew that Simon was in danger of failing, and He made His knowledge of Simon's peril and need a

ground for loving prayer in his behalf. Now we often perceive the need and peril of others. Sometimes we make their stumbling an occasion of sneers and merriment or contemptuous disdain. Why not rather make it an occasion of prayer? We see people displaying bad taste in dress or unconscious of some unpleasant defect. To look at these things uncharitably is an offense against the rights of our own spirits, to which we owe the discipline of noble and generous judgment. "Unless we pray for others," says Doctor Trumbull, "we are lacking in that spirit in which alone we can pray hopefully for ourselves, and we are living in neglect of a prime duty to God's dear ones who need and deserve our prayers."

It is easy to be unconscious of the time spent in school, but it is not possible to be schooled without time, or to live without school. All life is discipline. And the discipline of prayer takes time. It will come faster and more richly to us as we give time consciously for it. Jesus

gave time evenings (Mark vi: 45-47), mornings (Mark i: 35), and whole nights. Luke vi: 12. Apart from His set times, there was no time not filled with the spirit and instant possibility of prayer. He never drifted into the mood nor went to a place where He could not congenially face the Father with open eyes and an open heart. Is this true with us?

We shall doubtless require years to learn to pray for long seasons. A deeper knowledge of our own needs, a greater sense of the goodness of God, a broader sympathy with the trials and the sorrows of others, are necessary for this. But we must begin now with set times. If you have to go through a tunnel to your business, or across a ferry, or past a certain place daily, associate these times with a word of prayer. Pause often in reading or writing or at your work, in the office, on the farm, in the house, to look up and say, "Dear Father." Begin the day if you can with a quiet time. As Channing has said: "The hour is a still one. The

hurry and tumults of life are not begun, and we naturally share in the tranquillity round us. Having for so many hours lost our hold on the world, we can banish it more easily from the mind, and worship with less divided attention. This then is a favorable time for approaching the Author of our being, for strengthening the intimacy of our minds with Him, for thinking upon a future life and for seeking those spiritual aids which we need in the labors and temptations of every day. In the morning there is much to feed the spirit of devotion"—the change which God has produced, the goodness which He shows to us, seen in our re-creation by sleep, the anticipations of a new day. "Our early prayers will help to shed an odor of piety through the whole life. God, having first occupied, will more easily recur to, our mind. Our first step will be in the right path and we may hope a happy issue. If our circumstances will allow the privilege, it is a bad sign when no part of the morning is spent in prayer. If God finds no place in our minds at that

early and peaceful hour he will hardly recur to us in the tumults of life. Let a part of the morning, if possible, be set apart to devotion; and to this end we should fix the hour of rising, so that we may have an early hour at our disposal. Our piety is suspicious if we can renounce, as too many do, the pleasures and benefits of early prayer rather than forego the senseless indulgence of unnecessary sleep."

In this sweet and holy fellowship reverence must not destroy familiarity nor familiarity diminish reverence. He who is God is also Abba, Father. As I heard a quaint Italian say reverently once, "My Papa in heaven." Who dare deny to the child's heart the child's name for its Father? Above all else our relations to Him must be real, tender, sweet. It is the formalism, the artificiality, the unreality, of our attitude toward Him that kills most of our prayers. Is He our Father? Then let us speak to Him so. Let us enter into His loving confidence with open and ingenuous will.

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parched grounds refresh as with a shower!
We kneel and all around us seems to lower;
We rise and all the distant and the near
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear
We kneel how weak, we rise how full of power.
Why therefore should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overborne with care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?"

IV

THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE

It is easy to forget that we are not our own, but Christ's, and to act as though we were our own masters. We need to cultivate the habit of recognising Jesus as Lord, in every act and judgment. How may we do this? And even when we mean to remember that we belong to Christ and mean to serve Him with faithfulness, we are dissatisfied with our own weakness and inefficiency. How may we become efficient and strong? And although we may sometimes be sensible that we have some real power in doing Christ's work, we are conscious that there is a walk quite possible to us of more constant fellowship and might. How may we come into this for ourselves?

These are but a few of the many ques-

tions that arise in the Christian's personal life. One good answer to them all is found in the experience of Jeremiah: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of mine heart; for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts." The words of God brought joy and the vivid reminder of the ownership of the Lord.

This is just what Bible study does for the Christian life. There was nothing which the statutes and word of God did for the Psalmist, as repeatedly set forth in the One Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm, that our richer Bible will not do for us; and in proportion as our desire for a true and real life is sincere and earnest will our study of the Bible be zealous and constant. It is God's written message to us, and we can not truly live without it. As Jesus said to the tempter, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Each one of us must study the Bible

for himself. No one else can do our work for us. The methods of others will help us to perfect our methods, but each of us must work out for himself his own method of study. Every man gathered his own manna in the wilderness, and the good Shepherd calleth each of His sheep by name separately and leadeth them out. No man can do another man's studying for him. Each one must be willing to take time for himself; and Bible study should have our best time, and enough time. The fag ends of the day should not be the only time for it. "Study the Bible," Mr. Ruskin said, "making it your first daily business to understand some portion of it, and then your business the rest of the day to obey what you do understand." "Every morning," said Matthew Hale, Lord Chief Justice under Charles the Second, "read seriously and reverently a portion of the Holy Scripture and acquaint yourself with the doctrine thereof."

If we can get it, a little morning time should be given to the Bible. The day

should begin with a word of God that will echo through all its hours. And the time we give to the Bible should be ample time as well as good time. Now and then a whole day should be spent on it, and sometimes a whole vacation. Nothing else is so well worth while. As Canon Liddon said: "What do we read and leave unread? What time do we give to the Bible? No other book, let us be sure, can equally avail to prepare us for that which lies before us. . . . Looking back from that world, how shall we desire to have made the most of our best guide to it! How shall we grudge the hours we have wasted on any—be they thoughts or books or teachers, which only belong to the things of time!" He is a very foolish Christian who spends so much time on newspapers as to leave none for his Bible. It is better to "be a man of this one Book," as John Wesley said he wished to be, than of all other books.

All of us have quite enough temptations to meet to prevent real Bible study from becoming too easy. "I do not have

time;" "I have so much else to do;" "It is not interesting;" "I do not know how;" "I can't get into it;—" these are some of the innumerable whispers of the tempter. We want to go to bed in the evening, and do not want to rise early. We have enough to do through the day. There is no time left for the Bible! To meet all these difficulties, the Bible study that is to feed and sustain our personal Christian life must be determined and unflinching, and carried on, not superficially and spasmodically, but with persistent and definite purpose. We must lay our plans of study and execute them; and in them we must have that "humility and singleness of heart" recommended by John Locke, which makes us, as we study, say, like Samuel, with open mind and will, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth."

Such Bible study as the Christian must do to nourish and expand his personal life will not do itself. After time has been set aside for it, and the right spirit has been won, practical, effective plans

must be pursued. Mere indiscriminate, miscellaneous, unordered dipping in here and there will not suffice. Solid, sensible method is required. Ezekiel's vision was of life within wheels. It combined the spirit of life and the ordered movement of wheels. It is easy for us to lose a great deal through an indefensible prejudice against methods and rules in our spiritual life.

One good plan is to read the Bible through in course, frequently. This was the method which John Quincy Adams recommended: "The first and almost the only book deserving of universal attention is the Bible; the Bible is the book of all others to be read at all ages and in all conditions of human life, not to be read once or twice through, and then laid aside, but to be read in small portions of one or two chapters every day, and never to be intermitted, except by some overruling necessity. I speak as a man of the world to men of the world, and I say to you, 'Search the Scriptures.'"

There are eleven hundred and eighty-

nine chapters in the Bible. Reading two chapters each day, save Sunday, and eleven on Sunday, will carry one through the whole book in a year. Reading the Bible through over and over again in this way lodges it unconsciously in the memory. And it is worth while deliberately to commit to memory large sections of it. If young Christians neglect to do this, they will lose, and the Church will lose, and the world will lose. Nothing is so powerful to purify and strengthen as the Bible in the memory, " learned by heart," as our good phrase puts it. Mr. Ruskin has left on record his loving gratitude to his mother for having compelled him to learn the whole body of the fine old Scotch paraphrases of the Psalms. Many other men look back with deepest love and longing to Sunday evenings long ago, when, at a father's or a mother's knee, they recited the Scriptures they had been set to learn. It is a blessed thing when that can be said of our homes which Paul said of the home of Timothy, who had been taught his Bible " from a babe."

A yet simpler form of Bible study is to memorize verses and meditate upon them. We have scores of spare moments during the day, while dressing and undressing, going from place to place, to and from meals, passing from duty to duty, when our minds as a rule are adrift, nowhere. Fill these times with verses from the Bible. Carry a pocket Testament or cut up an old Bible and carry pieces in your pocket. Have a Silent Comforter or other Scripture roll in your bedroom. Not every Bible verse will have a message for you, perhaps, but there is not one without some meaning. Even the lists of names in Chronicles one old lady learned once, because she "would feel dreadfully ashamed to meet those people in heaven and not know their names." Mrs. Slosson tells in "Seven Dreamers" of another old lady whose favorite verse was, "At Michmash he hath laid up his carriages." The Bible is the richest, fullest book in the world, and will fit even the most peculiar mind.

But neither of these plans supersedes

the necessity of studying the Bible by books. The Bible is a little library of sixty-six books, with many writers, written in different lands and times. All the books can best be understood by understanding each book. We need to study the questions which Bible scholars deal with under the head of "Introduction." Who wrote this book? When? Why? What is he teaching? What is his special message and purpose? These inquiries will help to reveal what the book has to say to our own hearts and to this present world, because we shall have learned what the author had to say to the hearts and the world of his time. Doctor Broadus used to advise the study in this way, first of the Gospels, then of The Acts, Romans, Timothy, Psalms, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah.

Another profitable method of study is by subjects, either by truths, like faith, the love of God, obedience, prayer, the Lord's return; or by characters. Christ's comes first. Make a list of all the beautiful things you can see in Him, of all the wonderful things He said about Himself.

See if you can find anything that He said about Himself that was not lowly. Study His example as a man of prayer, as a student of His Bible, as a revelation of what God would have each of us to be. What was Christ that I am not, and that I ought to be? What am I that Christ was not, and that I ought not to be? Study Paul as a teacher, as a personal worker, as a friend, as a correspondent, as a missionary. Ferret out the noble lives and characters of Andrew, Philip, Barnabas, John, Timothy, Apollos, Aquila, and Priscilla. These should be our friends and companions, even now. It is for our sakes that their lives are recorded in the Book that can not be destroyed.

But no method of study can accomplish its true purpose for us that does not keep uppermost always the thought of the Bible as God's personal message to our own heart and will. Each truth that we perceive is a truth to be incorporated in character. What we learn, we must be. Knowledge about the Bible is poor and imperfect if it does not bear fruit in a

life of loving, joyful service of man and of the Son of man.

Our very Bible study, accordingly, must be a ministry. What we get, we must give. Meditating over what we read, until it becomes a part of us, we are to pass it on from us to others. "The man who has a faith," says Mazzini, "is bound to witness for it every hour of the day." Make your Bible study and what you are learning in it the subject of your conversation, and speak of the beauty of the Saviour you are coming increasingly to admire and adore.

And last, be often alone with your Bible. The Saviour will speak sweetly to you from it, if you will give Him time for confidence. The Bible, too, will do something for you in these times. As Izaak Walton quaintly says:—

> "Every hour
> I read you kills a sin
> Or lets a virtue in
> To fight against it."

And in the Psalmist's words,

> "Great peace have they which love Thy law;
> And they have none occasion of stumbling."

V

A CHRISTIAN'S STANDARDS

Both Christians and those who are not Christians fall easily into the fallacy of assuming that what they think right is right. I once overheard a young man and a young woman on a railroad train discussing the question of bicycle riding on Sunday. The young woman had taken the higher ground and was getting much the better of the argument. At last the young man tried to dismiss the question by saying, "Well, of course, if you think it is wrong, it would be wrong for you; but I can't see any harm in it, and if I can't, it isn't wrong for me to do it." Many young men justify themselves in betting or drinking or smoking, on the same ground.

But all this merely indicates that thinking so or not thinking so settles noth-

ing. Something objective, outside our whim and caprice, must constitute the settling thing. The fact that a man thinks Themistocles was ostracized in 470 B. C. is of no consequence, no matter how hard and positively he thinks so. He was ostracised in 471 B. C., and no amount of thinking or not thinking can affect the matter. And so in other things. A railroad signalman sets red lights. Thinking them yellow or green does not make them so. The company would laugh at an engineer who thought that his idea about it and not the thing itself was the conclusive element, and would dismiss him right promptly.

Let us think, however, of conduct and morals. It is equally true there that a man's appeal to his standards settles nothing. The question is, are his standards right? No man has a right to live below his standards; moreover, he may not have a right to live as low as his standards. A man's thoughts about what he can freely do may enable him to do what he has no right whatever to descend to.

He may think it is right for him to do wrong. What is right or wrong, true or false, is right or wrong, true or false, irrespective of what you and I think about it.

You may say that Paul says, "To him that thinketh anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." But he says "unclean," not "clean." It is negative, not positive. He declares, not that it is right for any man to do whatever he thinks right, but that it is wrong for him to do what he thinks is wrong. It is a counsel of caution—if there is doubt about it, don't do it. If you think a thing is unclean, you may not touch it, but it does not follow that if you think it is clean you may. "The hour cometh," said Jesus to His disciples, "that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God." Is murder therefore justifiable?

Well, but men ask, "Can anyone do more than act conscientiously?" Yes, he can make sure that his moral judgments are right. Conscience only tells us that

there is right and wrong. It does not tell us what is right and what wrong. Our moral judgment tells us that, and it is capable of education and enlightenment, and of discovering those eternal objective standards of right and wrong which exist in God and are borne in upon our mind and will in the gospel. Our business as Christians is not only to do what we believe to be right but to be sure that our beliefs conform to the eternal law of righteousness in God.

We who know or can know what this is are to be judged and held responsible according to our conformity to these objective, unchangeable standards, not according to our thoughts about them. Where men do not know and can not know that polygamy is wrong, God will judge them accordingly; but he will not judge us in the same way no matter how conscientiously we might believe polygamy to be right. And we are bound to find out these standards of God. We can not say, "We did not know them. We lived according to our standards." In

this country ignorance of the law is no excuse. If a man kills game out of season in ignorance, or commits arson and pleads that he did not know that it was illegal to burn a man's house down, the law does not let him off. The laws of the land are published, and all men are supposed to know them. This was God's ordinance in Israel. "If any one sin and do any of the things which the Lord hath commanded not to be done; though he knew it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity." You may think a fire will not burn, but put your hand in it and your thought about it will not save you a blistered finger. It is so in morals. God has His laws; if we break them, they are broken and we must reap the consequences. Those laws are there, solid, eternal, untouched by any of our vagaries, shufflings, or argumentations.

Every one of us needs to remember this. The Christian life that forgets it will soon show the weakening effects of its forgetfulness. To keep life true and clean we need its fiber and reliabilities,

its veracities, as Carlyle would say. These are in the will of our holy God, and not in our human moods and caprices.

Some men's standards are shaped by their own appetites. Some men are weak and of flabby judgment. Some are morally color-blind. "The lamp of thy body is thine eye; when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when it is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Look therefore whether the light that is in thee be not darkness." Luke xi: 34, 35.

Doctor Trumbull has told in one of his sermons of a most remarkable case of moral color-blindness. "The Rev. Dr. Nathan Strong, pastor of my old home church in Hartford, was, as I have been told, the owner of a distillery, while in the active pastorate. Not being so successful a distiller as he was a pastor, he failed in the rum business, and a civil judgment was rendered against him accordingly. To evade the sheriff's execution, he was compelled to shut himself in the parsonage week days for a series of

weeks; but when Sundays came, he moved out in solemn dignity, with his cocked hat and knee breeches, and passed across to the church to preach the gospel as usual. No civil process would disturb him on Sundays. His conscience does not seem to have disturbed him, on the distillery question, any day of the week. There are churches still standing," says Doctor Trumbull, "here in New England, which were built with the proceeds of lotteries duly authorised for that sacred purpose."

"If our consciences," he adds, "work differently from the consciences of our fathers on these points, it is because our moral eyesight has been trained to finer distinctions in color, under the treatment of those whom God has set to be spiritual oculists." Paul found in his later life how wrong he had been in his earlier course, and bitterly condemned himself. "I verily thought with myself [at that time]," he said later, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

This may sound hard. We like to think of the sweet and gentle side of the Christian life. But this is alone healthful and safe. The loving grace of God is not meant to conceal the holy will of God. The Christian life is not sweet feeling only. It is iron righteousness. To tell people to go ahead and do whatever corresponds to their standards, without taking pains to see whether their standards are right, is fatal. It will not save a man who has done the fatal thing to plead that his moral sight was defective, if he had ample opportunity to correct that defect. The color-blindness of the engineer who has mistaken a red danger signal for a yellow safety light, and runs his train-load of passengers into an abyss, will not save the lives of the poor creatures hurled to their doom, or his own life, either.

So in morals, too. A man may lie, thinking a lie is sometimes justifiable, but he is a liar nevertheless; and, unfortunately, the book of The Revelation makes no distinction between justifiable lies and the other kind, but declares unequivocally,

"But for . . . all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth."

No, there are objective standards in God, firm and absolute, and the strong and admirable life is the life that is keen to respond to this, that sees the new light which shines on the duties of a Christian seeking for it, that girds itself for the highest and most exacting attainment, and draws conduct resolutely up to it, that does not say, "I would rather;" "That is so hard." The fact that other men do this or do that proves nothing whatever as to my course. He is the splendid man who sees the high and stainless will of God for human life, who stands serene and immovable on the rock of Christ's clear revelation of the right, and who wills to do the thing that is eternally true.

VI

CHRIST'S REVERSAL OF HUMAN JUDGMENTS

Some of the judgments of men Jesus came to reaffirm and complete. He said He had come, not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil. He removed none of the moral ordinances of God. He poured fresh vital power into them. Herein lay one surprise and service of His coming. But some judgments of men He came to annul and reverse. In this lay another surprise and service of His coming. Both Jesus' affirmations of the judgments of God and His reversals of the judgments of men entered into His mission.

Christ's collisions with human judgments gave infinite zest and variety to His work. They lifted it above all monotone. He did not come to reduce everything

to a dead level. The prophecy that His era would be the day of the straightened paths and filled valleys and the humbled hills was not more a prophecy that a smooth way should be opened than a declaration of the overturning mission of Jesus. He would make valleys of men's hills, and hills of men's valleys. This was His mother's song of gladness to God:

"He hath put down princes from their thrones,
And hath exalted them of low degree.
The hungry He hath filled with good things,
And the rich He hath sent empty away."

Jesus threw Himself athwart the current sentiments and manners of men. All who met Him testified that He was not like other men. His speech was not their speech. His acts were not their acts. His judgments were not their judgments.

It was a startling thing when this young Galilean peasant rose up fearlessly to shatter the conventional assumptions and moral subterfuges of His day. This was the burden of His great discourse which we call the Sermon on the Mount.

"You interpret the command not to kill as satisfied if you have not actually taken life. But I call wrong anger and contempt murderous, and liable to judgment as such. You regard a man as innocent of adultery who has not been guilty of the act. I hold the thought of it criminal. You are careful of veracity in oaths, but I say, Swear no oaths, but be true always. You believe in the law of retaliation. I denounce it. You enjoin love of friend and hate of foe. I scorn such atheism. God's sons must bear their Father's generous heart. You holy people are adepts at mock humility and public piety. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou be not seen of men to fast. You pile up wealth on earth. The moth and rust corrupt it, and the thieves steal it. Cease such folly, and be rich in God." Is it strange that, when He ended these revolutionary words, "the multitudes were astonished at His teaching; for He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes?" And was it not most

natural, as He went on with His mission, assailing tradition after tradition, demolishing hypocrisy after hypocrisy, and nullifying judgment after judgment, that men of evil hearts should be angered, and that, forced to choose between His death and His views, they should prefer killing Jesus on a cross to killing the sin in their own hearts, that were shut against Him and His truth? For the reversed judgments of Jesus demand reversed wills in men.

Jesus once answered the Pharisees, when they scoffed at Him for His condemnation of mammon service, by declaring, "That which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." How could He do otherwise, therefore, as the Son of God, who knew His Father's mind than overturn the views of men? This was what He set Himself to do among His disciples. First of all He reversed their judgments as to the comparative importance of inner and outer. He repeatedly condemned before them the settled habit of mind of the Pharisees,

who cleansed the outside of the cup and platter, while their inward part was full of extortion and wickedness, and who lodged the guilt of sin in the overt act and condoned the covert lust. And He pressed on His disciples, when alone, the supreme importance of pure fountains within, assuring them that the overflowing streams would care for themselves. Men laid the emphasis on conduct or ceremony. Jesus laid it on character.

Likewise He set cause above effect. Men do not. They are content to keep themselves clean of gross acts, though heedless of the inner shapings of taste or evil, which mean gross acts in time. In social and political life we are ever dealing with the consequences of forces, and overlooking the forces themselves. We do this with poverty, with intemperance, with political abuses. Reformers try to abolish the evil by attacking its manifestations, but the evil is deeper than the phenomena in which it expresses itself. Distributing food to the needy, limiting liquor licenses, introducing civil-service

reform, are proper procedures, but they do not go deep enough. Jesus leaped past all these things. He said nothing about slavery, about the inferiority of woman, about intemperance, about gambling; but He did set up principles which went straight to the causes of these evils, and there can be no ownership of man, no abuse of woman, no prostitution of life, no dishonesty of gain, where men obey Him. Jesus' influence has been the mightiest reformatory influence in the world, because He reversed the judgments of men as to the method of reform.

And He explicitly contradicted the judgments of men as to the comparative importance of higher and lower. "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so, but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am

among you as he that serveth." Ever since Jesus said this, His standard of measurement has been gaining acceptance in the world, and the lowly man is great because Christ has overturned the judgments of men in this regard.

Jesus found a world that did not believe in human equality. He has been destroying its disbelief. He found a world that did not believe in human unity. He has been welding the race into one. He found a world that despised toil. "A mechanic's occupation is degrading," said Cicero. "A workshop is incompatible with anything noble." He took up a trade, and worked at a bench. Aristotle characterised women as beings of a lower kind, while Plato made it a mark of civil disorganisation that women should be on an equality with their husbands. Jesus drew no distinction between man and woman, and has deliberately reversed human judgment as to the subserviency of woman. He entered a world that had lost faith in goodness. "All things," wrote Seneca, "are full of iniquity and vice."

Jesus refused to abandon faith in man, even when man was doing his utmost to discredit such faith. He reversed man's judgment of his own failure. He found a world that had lost joy in the present life, and abandoned hope for the life to come. "The aim of all philosophy," said Seneca, "is to despise life." "What folly it is to renew life after death!" exclaimed Pliny. "You rob me of man's greatest good—death." Jesus smote such pessimism and despair with the jubilant radiance of His own glorious life and love. In all these things He affronted and reversed the judgments of men. He was the first of the men "who have turned the world upside down." But the whole revolution is His.

Sometimes Jesus reversed human judgments by the mere silent influence of His presence, as when the woman taken in sin was brought to Him, and He stooped down and wrote on the sand. The scribes and Pharisees had thought it would be a fine thing to drag the woman into Jesus' presence with their loathsome tale. He

spoke but one general word, and stooped down again and wrote, and then the affair ceased to appear such a fine thing to the men whom the presence of Jesus convicted of shame and sin and hypocrisy. There is a world of revolutionary power still in the presence of Jesus. A thousand things shrivel into their true paltriness when the blaze of His countenance falls on them. Take your judgments there, and see how many of them He will reverse by the mere influence of His silence and His sinless purity.

For Christ is full still of reversing power. He is not dead. He ever liveth, and in each human life, and in the life of humanity, He is working His overturnings. All righteousness is the product of His influence. He is the source of all scorn of the sins the world loves, and of all love of the virtues the world hates. And that profound change which the New Testament calls repentance, or change of mind, is merely the acceptance of the reversals of Jesus. We alter our judgments to correspond with His. We transpose

our antipodes and nadir. The " despised and rejected of men " becomes our adored sovereign and Lord, and, like Paul, we preach the faith that once we destroyed. We exchange the far country for our Father's house, and the judgments of that evil land yield to the contrary judgments of Him who brought us thence and hither.

VII

ALWAYS AND IN ALL THINGS

Of the events of the last Monday of our Lord's life two only are recorded for us, the withering of the fig-tree and the cleansing of the temple. Doubtless there was much else, both of act and of word, on the part of our Saviour which was of greatest significance, but these two things alone are saved to the Church. And yet these two are enough, for they contain two great moral principles which sweep up and down and to and fro across the whole life of man.

These two principles are embodied in the very features of Jesus' conduct which seem most arbitrary. It is often so, and must be so. The standards of Christ's life and action were not the standards of ours. They sharply collided with ours. When our eyes are opened we perceive

that ours are wrong, and His right; but until then it is tolerably certain that just those elements in His doctrine or behavior which are most characteristic, most illuminating, most veracious, will give us most trouble and seem most strange to us.

He withered and slew a fig-tree that was bearing no figs at a season when figs were not to be expected. The spirit of cavilling has denounced this act. The fig-tree, men say, was but acting according to its nature, in bearing no fruit in the spring. If Jesus' conduct had been only the outcome of personal hunger and disappointment, it would have been unworthy, but no miracle of His ever had a simple personal import. In the Temptation He refused to work any miracle for personal ends; and at the last, when He might have summoned ten legions of angels, He quietly submitted to the death of the cross and the taunts of the people, "He saved others, Himself He can not save." And in this case the miracle was not wrought out of pique and petulance. Such thoughts never entered the mind of

any one who understood Christ. The miracle was a parable in action. It was a lesson of judgment on life. The Jewish nation was bearing leaves and no fruit. The time had not come, men said, for the Messiah and for human recognition of Him. The season for figs was afar off. Jesus taught by the sharp lesson of the fig-tree that in the moral life the season for figs is always here, that recognition of spiritual opportunity and compliance with moral principle are not postponable.

This lesson of "always" in the spiritual life and in the moral world is a necessary lesson. We are habitual delinquents. We justify our fruitlessness on the ground that we are sowing seed, and that the harvest time has not come. For years, generations, and centuries the seed has been sown in human life before us, and yet we are saying, "The time of figs has not come." "Say not ye," replies Jesus, "there are four months and then cometh harvest? Lift up your eyes and look, behold the fields are white already

to the harvest." Every man is to be bearing fruit daily. The season of figs is always.

And, further, in the matter of moral principle, we are constantly discovering pretexts for postponement or exception. "This is not just the opportunity," we say. "It is not a felicitous time," or, "This set of circumstances is surely novel and calls for our waiving for the present the application of our normal moral convictions." And so many men go trimming and compromising through life, always finding some reason for bearing leaves alone and no fruit. "Gather them together and cast them into the fire," the Lord of the vineyard will say at the last.

The man who isn't "always," is in danger of being "never." He schools himself into a character of evasion. The only sure way of being ever right is to resolve to be always right. And after all, principles are only principles when they are solidly sure. Rules have their exceptions, but not principles. There are times when law and ordinances may and

must be overridden or held in abeyance or superseded by some higher law or ordinance. But a principle has no such alternating life. It is always.

The other event of this day in Jesus' life fortified and enlarged this teaching of His from the figless tree. He went into the temple and cast out them that sold and them that bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sold the doves. That was all right. He was destroying vested interests, to be sure, but vested interest in wrong-doing was not regarded by Jesus in the same deferential way in which many modern men regard vested interest in the liquor traffic, gambling, and prostitution. He swept all the mass of trade and haggling barter out of the house of His Father, and told the multitude why He did it. "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?' but ye have made it a den of robbers." Now that was all right, and doubtless the public opinion of a great section of the

people supported Jesus in His course to this point.

But Jesus did not stop here. "And He would not suffer that any man should carry a vessel through the temple." That was fanaticism, men say. He was an extremist. Why could He not stop at some reasonable moderation? If this were a present-day transaction we can understand how the moderate men would argue. "Now," they would say, "you have driven out the money-changers and the tradesmen, you have established your principle. Don't press matters to an extreme. Carrying vessels through the temple is not a wicked thing. Show yourself a fair and moderate man by not pressing your principle too far." That is the way with men. But it was not Jesus' way. The fact that the matter was comparatively trivial and innocent did not alter the fact that it was unallowable and wrong, and the Lord of inexorable righteousness, of the rectitude that never swerved, refused to surrender the victory He had gained in great things by

abandoning the very same principle when presented in small things.

A principle is a principle always and in all things. No lie is so tiny as to cease being a lie, and the wrong of it does not consist in its dimension, but in its existence under any dimension. The same power that makes Jesus able to save from the smallest sin constitutes His power to save from the greatest sin, and all the power and quality which are requisite in the one who will save from gross sin, are necessary in Him who will save from insignificant sin. It is the sin from which we are to be saved, not its size. And no sin is insignificant. Nor is any principle which is the antinomy of sin.

Now these truths of the last Monday of the Saviour's life are vital truths for our Christianity. We are saying constantly that the conditions are not ripe for a spiritual awakening, or that we expect they will be ripe some months ahead, or that we are not qualified for personal work, but hope some day to be. The Lord withered these falsehoods when He

withered the fig-tree. Or we say that when we have more time we will study our Bibles and cultivate the devotional life, or will develop those capacities without which the Christian life is an imperfect and joyless thing. We forget that the time of figs is always, and that the Lord will endure in the world of men none adorned merely with leaves.

Or men say that their gambling is not such a dreadful thing. "It is only for trifles or for a little money, or the limit is low, and no one loses who can't afford it." What would be wrong in the large is innocent in the small. Or in the common intercourse of life, men urge, little deceptions, even lies, are neccessary, though they admit that a great lie would be wrong, or even a little one if told with insufficient motive. But water is wet whether in the ocean or in the drop. And a lie is a lie whether it is a metre long or a millimetre. The Lord will have no buying and selling in the temple. Neither will He have any carrying of any vessels through it.

The very despair and disintegration of life consists in opening up our principles to interminable exceptions. Let us have done with it. Let our principles be solid and unyielding. Our sympathies and affections for men are to be rich and kindly, but there is no excuse for treason to principle at any time or in any circumstance. God has given us always all sufficiency in all things in His grace. Let us give Him always in all sufficiency and in all things the answer of clear and unwavering hearts, which repose unshaken in a rectitude of life as rigid as the rocks.

VIII

THE PUBLICITY OF THE SECRET LIFE

MAN guards the privacy of his personality with jealous care. He will not allow it to be too deeply invaded. Some points of contact with life he allows of necessity, but he will not tolerate any unveiling of his secret nature. He finds a great comfort in this. However much men may see, there is an inner life which they cannot see, which is his alone. No eye can penetrate therein. There he sits alone with the secrets that are beyond speech and scrutiny. This is our view.

Christ calls this view a foolish blunder. Men, indeed, may not be able to see beyond the outer walls of the human spirit, but in reality, Jesus declares, there is no such thing as privacy and solitude for it. As He met men He was

not blocked in his analysis of them by any barred doors. He saw their innermost springs of thought and motive. He needed no testimony borne to the true nature of any man, for He himself knew what was in man. And the power which He possessed while here He suggested was a permanent attribute of the Father. His vision is of the secret things. "Thy Father which seeth in secret," He called Him.

And, although men can hide themselves from one another now, and imagine that for the secrets buried in their spirits there is neither publicity here nor resurrection hereafter, Jesus taught that, as no secret is complete enough to be secret from God now, so none is so complete as to be shut always to men. The universe is one day to watch the utter and naked exposure of every human spirit. "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed, and hid, that shall not be known." The full horror of this burst later on the Apostle Paul: "We must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of

Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Can any cheek be so hardened as not to blaze with shame then before the calm, steady eye of the innumerable multitude looking on the mass of evil imaginations, uncleannesses, unkindlinesses, which were kept back from the view of men in life, but are now bare for the pity of the redeemed and the scorn of the lost?

All the hidden things of life will be public to all eyes, then, as they are public now to the eyes of God. Ezekiel records in the eighth chapter of his prophecy his startling introduction to this unillusionment of God. No pretense of external propriety blinded God's vision. What men were seeing was to Him of less than no consequence. What men could not see riveted His gaze. Nothing concerned Him but the secrets of men.

And this is the great truth. What we deem our most secret things, shared

by none, are the public knowledge of God, and of others than God. "A cloud of witnesses" is watching us, participants in the undeceivableness of God and looking with Him, not as man looketh, on the outward appearance, but on the secrets of the heart. Those whose judgments we should most prize, who have gone before us and are with God. free now from the limitations which surround the knowledge of men and confine it to what we grant it, see now what we do in the dark, every man in his chamber of imagery.

The gospel declares the abolition of secrecy. "No man saw me do it," says the sinner. "It was only a thought. I would not dare to express it. I did not express it. No one knows that I cherished it." "It was only a desire. I have not done the thing. No one knows." "I did it in the dark. It will never be found out." Not so. No public act of our lives ever was so open or under such universal observation. What do the unseen spectators care for the drama of our

acts? They watch the battle ground of the inner life. When once evil has conquered there, the evil act will follow in its course. We may be sure that it is precisely that part of our life which we deem secret, and in which, therefore, we tolerate what we could not endure that men should see, that interests God and the unseen witnesses. They see most clearly and watch most acutely what we think we have hidden from all sight.

We forget this because we are externalists. Our emphasis is on the outer behaviour. "Do the right things" is our rule. Christ's emphasis is on the inner life, the secret place. Guilt there is guilt before, or in the absence of, any consequent act. "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." And purification must begin in the inner spirit. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocites! for ye cleanse the outside of the

cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also." "Be right within" is Christ's rule. This alone is character, for "character," as Mr. Moody used to say in one of his favourite quotations "is what a man is in the dark." The only way to make sure always of having nothing to conceal or be ashamed of in our outer life is to have nothing demanding concealment or fearing publicity in the life that is dark and unknown to men, but ablaze with the light of the scrutinies of the unseen world.

And, after all, less is secret than we suppose even here among men. What is cherished in the secret chambers of the imagery is shaping temper and will and impulse and taste. Before we know it, almost, what we thought was secret has betrayed itself, or has so corrupted us that the very desire for its secrecy has decayed. The only safe and noble course

is so to live and think and feel as to fear as little the eyes that watch our hearts as the eyes that watch the ways of our outer life. "To keep clear of concealment," said Phillips Brooks, "to keep clear of the need of concealment, to do nothing which he might not do out on the middle of Boston Common at noonday—I can not say how more and more that seems to me to be the glory of a young man's life. It is an awful hour when the first necessity of hiding anything comes. The whole life is different henceforth. When there are questions to be feared, and eyes to be avoided, and subjects which must not be touched, then the bloom of life is gone. Put off that day as long as possible. Put it off forever, if you can." So surely as there is anything needing to be concealed, said Jesus, will it be impossible to conceal it. "Whatsoever ye have said in the darkness shall be heard in the light; and what ye have spoken in the ear in the inner chambers shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."

It is of man's self-deceivableness that on one side he thinks he can conceal what is inevitably open, and on the other regards as dark and hidden the very things which God has made plain and clear. The simple message of Jesus was an enigma to the wise and understanding. They knew too much to know. The gospel was veiled in them; the god of this world, who had persuaded them that their secrets were hid, had blinded their minds so that God's open news was darkness to them.

Very sweet it is to remember that this truth has its other side. The world, looking at what it sees, pronounces one man good, when, in God's sight, he is diseased and corroded and unclean, and this is horror. But the world, looking at what it sees, condemns another man, while God sees in him the struggle against the sin that besets him, the bitter loathing of it, the helpless trust of the heart in the mercy of the Saviour, the sense of failure and defeat, the humility and weariness of utter abasement. He

hears the cry of the soul for the strength of the Spirit, and with that which the world has not seen and heard, the Father is well pleased.

" O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me, . . .
Thou understandest my thought afar off, . . .
And art acquainted with all my ways.
For there is not a word in my tongue,
But, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether. . . .
The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee. . . .
Search me, O God, and know my heart:
Try me, and know my thoughts:
And see if there be any way of wickedness in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting."

IX

A CHRISTIAN'S FRIENDS

Every life must have its affections and its antagonisms. We are made for loving and for hating. We can not escape from desires and attachments, or from dislikes and repugnances. Let us think now only of the former and the place they must fill in the Christian life. There is a place for them in life which must be filled. Men may deny this. They may dislike society, but in that case they like solitude. They may avoid friendships, but in that case they seek friendlessness. They may not like conversation or books, but some contrary taste will of necessity come in instead. All of us have our tastes, our attachments, our friends. We must have them. We can only choose what they shall be.

No choice can be more important.

What we are is largely the product of the influences that have played upon us and shaped us. As we look back over our life we can trace in it the changes produced from without by our friends of whatsoever sort. We can mark the work of some book that came into our life, at a time when we were just plastic for it, and left its ineffaceable imprint. We can see when a certain new taste came to birth and once born in turn gave birth to a score of new insights and outreaches. We can recall when a new truth, hidden from us before, suddenly burst upon us and became our friend, and at once began in us a work of transformation and noble growth. And above all, we can remember the very day, perhaps, when we caught for the first time the light in human eyes, and felt the slow warmth or the sudden leap of heart within that told us a new friend had come. What boundless blessings that friendship has brought to us since!

In our deepest life nothing is more important than our friends. The essence of

the truest Christian life is a friendship with Jesus. "No longer," He said, "do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known unto you." And our whole life will be rich and full and strong and worthy when filled with such friends as the great Friend will approve, and such friendships as spring up naturally and irresistibly out of His perfect love.

With friends and friendships like these, the absence of other things is unnoticed. "When Socrates," wrote Dr. Samuel Johnson, "was building himself a home at Athens, being asked by one that observed the littleness of the design, why a man so eminent would not have an abode more suitable to his dignity, he replied 'that he should think himself sufficiently accommodated if he could see that narrow habitation filled with real friends.'" The friendless king, with treasures and palace, is poor and pitiable in comparison with his lowly subject who loves and is

loved by friends who trust him and who desire his trust.

"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is,
That a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

The true wealth and joy of life is in friends. With true friendships there is no room for discontent. Our Christian life can lack nothing, can be only a rich, sweet, pure content when realised as a living friendship with the Saviour.

"Since Jesus is my friend,
And I to Him belong,
It matters not what foes intend,
However fierce and strong."

But besides the friendship of Jesus, life is full of human friendships, or ought to be. Jesus the Friend is the real fountain and guarantee of human friendship. And the friendships that Jesus fosters have the character of the perfect friendship that He offers. They are abiding. That is their first characteristic. No friendship that is not abiding will find a place in the true Christian life, for the reason that no re-

lationship that is temporary or transient can be a friendship. This is not the world's view. "Whilst you are prosperous," says Ovid, "you can remember many friends; but when the storm comes, you are left alone." "Friendship," says Cato, "ought not to be unripped, but unstitched." But these are neither friends nor friendships. One might as well speak of dry water or a cold fire as of a broken friendship. The Lord loved enduringly. Let us be like Him in this. When our ideals of friendship-love disintegrate and we allow ourselves to speak of it as a passing or feeble thing, liable to destruction by any act or word, one of the best elements in the Christian life is destroyed, namely, the will to love in spite of lovelessness. That is what makes the divine love so holy and wonderful.

For it is selfishness that mars friendship. We cherish our friendships for what they are to us, rather than for what we may be in them, and so, naturally, when we cease to get out of them what we counted on in the original bargain, we

drop them in disgust. But the true Christian life will hold its friendships in higher esteem. It will enter them only with the will to give help and do good, and so it will not be disappointed when it is shown that help is needed and that there is room for doing good.

Among our friends there should be some lowly lives. It is not good that all of any man's friends should be on the same social plane with himself or on a higher social plane. Some should be lower. It might be enough to point to Jesus' example. Though He was the Son of God, He stooped to share the food of fishermen, and to make publicans His friends. But apart from the duty of Christlike service, we lose much by having no friends among the poor. There are experiences which only the poor possess, and they have visions and simplicities and sympathies which it is one of the greatest privileges of life to share. The true Christian life requires genuine and equal friendships with those who have less of some things than we have, and as

compensation, at the even hands of the good God, of other things have more. It is the regret of one of the most famous boys' schools in this land that it draws its boys exclusively from one social class, and therefore lacks the fibre and tone which poor boys would provide. There is another great school which supplies scholarships for needy boys and makes room for them on the ground that the school could not do its work without them, or shape character and will, as it aims to do in all its boys, without the help of an element in the school only to be found in the presence of boys of scanty means, but brave, strong-hearted, and conscious of the manliness of sacrifice and toil.

Those men and women, and boys and girls, are to be pitied who can not easily make friendships of this sort; who are too priggish to fit into them, or too blind to see their joy and help. And no one of us, however humble and lowly, need miss the help and joy. There is always some one a little lower down whom we can help,

and helping find that we have gained a hundredfold more than we gave.

We are to have other friends than persons. There is spiritual help and roundness of mind and heart in a love for nature, "the art of God," for trees and brooks and the blue beauty of the sky; for birds and the little things that God has made. St. Francis, the legend says, so loved the creatures that they felt his love and came to him. It is good for a Christian to have through all his life a child's heart of tender pity for the little things.

Among books, too, we are to make friendships. It is both right and proper to read many books, but it is wrong not to form special friendships with a few. We must make our own choices, but that heart has missed something which has not a little circle of intimate friends, loved perhaps by others also, but yet its own particular and sole friends. Get if you can some books of rich association and history. I have a copy of Thomas

Fuller's "Good Thoughts" which was carried during the war by a dear friend, and which sank in the sea with an army transport, in seventy fathoms, lay there three months, and was subsequently recovered. It is rebound now, but its pages show the water stains, especially the page on which occur the words of the good old preacher, "Music is sweetest near or over rivers, where the echo thereof is best rebounded by the waters." Of course, we make friends with the Bible, and have one copy of it, surely, that is familiar and responsive to our touch, and that knows our ways and will open to what we love best.

In the great range of truth, also, it is good for a Christian while trying to reach and love all, to have some few great truths especially familiar and precious to him—friends, as it were, that will come to him in his free hours and linger with him, comforting and strengthening and quickening him. The love of Christ, the will of God, the care of the Father, the lesson of the Cross, the power of the Resurrec-

tion,—these are true friends. In the early Church we find the apostles making much of the truth of Christ's second coming. Jesus had made much of it. It was tied indissolubly to the Lord's Supper—"as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come." Paul loved it, and hoped that others would. He was to receive his crown of righteousness at that day, and not he only, but all those also that love Christ's appearing. It is good for the heart to have friends like these among the great truths of life, and to possess the blessing of their companionship and transfiguring might.

If our friends were only for life here it would yet be worth our while to seek them; but they are not for this life only. Whether for weal or woe, we make them for eternity. Thus Whately writes: "As we have seen those who have been loving playmates in childhood grow up, if they grow up with good, truth-like dispositions, into still closer friendship in riper years, so also it is probable that when this,

our state of childhood shall be perfected, in the maturity of a better world, the like attachments will continue between those companions who have trod together the Christian path to glory, and have taken sweet counsel together and walked in the house of God as friends."

X

THE NOBILITY OF WRATH

"And He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart." This is what Mark says of the Saviour, who was meek and lowly in heart, and who, as a lamb before His shearers is dumb, opened not His mouth. The Lord of love was angry. Can it be possible? Mark's word for "anger" can not be explained away. It is the regular New Testament word for anger or wrath. And why should one try to explain it away? Right wrath is no less noble than love. Each necessitates the other. Christ's loving offer of health on the Sabbath is followed by His anger at human faithlessness, and His stern rebuke of Pharisaic hyprocrisy precedes His tender appeal to the city which would not recognise her King. One day He stood as Master in the temple, with blazing eyes and a whip

of cords in His hand, driving out the men who made His Father's house a place of merchandise and a den of thieves, and the next He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and opens not His mouth.

Our Lord's very love of purity necessitated a hatred of the knowledge of sin, and His love of holiness a hatred of sin itself. His positive affection for the good involved a positive detestation of the evil. And by so much as His heart was tender toward the things that were worthy and pure, was it unavoidably hard toward all that was low and unlovely and wrong.

Wrath is noble because it is necessary. We can not maintain ourselves in a world of sin by a mere neglect of its evil while we seek its good. The struggle toward what we seek involves a struggle from what we shun. It is the evil of the world that furnishes us with footing for our ascent.

"We rise by the things that are under our feet,
By what we have mastered of good and of gain,
By the pride deposed and the passions slain,
And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet."

The life that is a mere struggle against sin is in danger of being a mere victim to sin. But the life that is not a struggle against sin at all is in equal danger of missing its end. "Be not overcome of evil" is Paul's counsel of conflict. "How?" we ask. "Overcome evil with good." "Draw nigh to God," James enjoins. "How?" we ask. "Resist the devil."

An attempt to escape from human evil by ignoring it, or denying its existence, or cultivating a mere passive interest in it, is dangerous. The safer course is to hate it. That is the purpose of its existence so far as the Christian is concerned,—to supply a legitimate object of his wrath. One part of the mission of Christ may be described in these terms: "I came not to send peace, but a sword, . . . to set a man at variance." In the heart of God Himself we find such hatred beside His infinite love. The same disciple who speaks of the love that gave Jesus to die speaks also of "the fierceness of the wrath of almighty God,"—the same God of whom the prophet said that He was of "purer

eyes than to behold iniquity," and who "can not look on sin with any degree of allowance."

There are times in the life of man, and of each man, when this truth needs to be revived. The human spirit slips into moderatism, into frivolity, into softness of moral judgment. At such times we need to learn afresh from our Lord the nobility of wrath. It was with some recognition of this that Newman wrote the extreme words in his "Apologia": "I do not shrink from uttering my firm conviction that it would be a gain to the country were it vastly more superstitious, more bigoted, more gloomy, more fierce, in its religion, than at present it shows itself to be." The Psalmist felt this, and cried:

"Hot indignation hath taken hold upon me,
Because of the wicked that forsake Thy law."

Such noble wrath is a fountain of great power and of great joy. "Luther said that he never did anything well till his wrath was excited, and then he could do

anything well." And Paul was a splendid illustration of this. His mighty soul reared against sophistries and falsehoods and squalors of all kinds. There came times when he thought and wrought like a roaring storm upon the sea. Many of his counsels embody his own spirit. "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath [that is, "anger run into excess," a word used only here in the Bible]: neither give place to the devil." And the power of such wrath is itself a joy. Robertson of Brighton has recalled one of the moments in his own life when he felt this: "My blood was at the moment running fire, and I remembered that I had once in my life stood before my fellow-creature with words that scathed and blasted; once in my life I felt a terrible might; I knew and rejoiced to know that I was inflicting the sentence of a coward's and a liar's hell."

There is a vast peril in such power. Though we be angry, we are not to sin. And how may men feel right wrath and escape sin? In his "Sermon on Resent-

ment," Bishop Butler specifies the conditions under which righteous wrath becomes sinful: "(1) when, from partiality to ourselves, we imagine an injury done us when there is none; (2) when this partiality represents it to us greater than it really is; (3) when we feel resentment on account of pain or inconvenience without injury; (4) when indignation rises too high; (5) when pain or harm is inflicted to gratify that resentment, though naturally raised." But it is safer not to be angry for ourselves at all. True wrath must have no selfishness in it. It must be a zeal, not for personal honor, but for the rights of truth and purity, and for the glory of Christ. The Psalmist's hatred was not of his own foes, or for his own wrongs. "I hate every false way." "I hate and abhor falsehood." "I hate them that hate Thee." Those may hate who hate evil for its hatefulness, and for the sake of God. Because he did this, Robertson was saved from the perils of his wrath. "I have seen him," wrote one of his friends,

"grind his teeth and clench his fists when passing a man who he knew was bent on dishonoring an innocent girl."

Those may be angry at sin in the world who are most angry at sin in themselves.

> "Thou to wax fierce
> In the cause of the Lord!
> Anger and zeal,
> And the joy of the brave,
> Who bade *thee* to feel,
> Sin's slave?"

Hate sin in yourself first, and then you may hate it in itself and in the world.

And those can enjoy the exhilaration of true wrath, and escape its dangers and weakness, who depart never from the presence of Christ. To be angry out of Him is to exchange bitterness against sin for hatred of the sinner, and firmness of will for hardness of heart. But he can be angry and sin not, and serve God and man in his wrath, whose anger is born of "the wrath of Almighty God," and "the wrath of the Lamb."

XI

A CHRISTIAN'S FOES

"WELL do I remember," said Kingsley, of his friend Maurice, "when we were looking together at Leonardo da Vinci's fresco of the 'Last Supper,' his complaining, almost with indignation, of the girlish and sentimental face which the painter, like too many Italians, had given to St. John." John was the apostle of love, friend of the Saviour and of all men, but he was also brother of James, and these two the Lord had named Boanerges, which is Sons of Thunder. He was the one who wrote "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. . . . And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." Yet it is the same apostle who speaks bitterly

of Satan's possession of Judas and of his traitorous character from the beginning, who never refers to Nicodemus without a touch of antagonism to his timidity, and who writes of those who betray the teaching of Christ, "If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works." The loving John was no soft weakling. His heart was tender, but his will was stern toward all falsehood and cowardice and sin. He made room in his life for enmities as well as affections.

Now, it may seem at first thought that there can be no place for foes and hostility in the Christian life. We think of it as a life of love, of forgiveness, of patient endurance of wrongdoing. It is this. But it is also a life of hate, of implacableness, of eager resistance of wrong. If it needs to be rich in friends, it must needs also boldly recognise and confront its foes, and not cry peace when there is no peace, or seek rest when it is a time for action

and conflict. It was just the unwillingness to fight wrong and to be defeated and die fighting it, if need be, that made Erasmus such a weakling in the seething times of the Reformation, while Luther's power lay in his huge uncompromisingness, his vigorous struggling against wrong, his inability to condone it or to be silent before it.

"I have always been cautious," said Erasmus. "I would rather die than cause a disturbance in the State. . . . When we can do no good, we have a right to be silent. A worm like me must not dispute with our lawful rulers. . . . We must bear almost anything rather than throw the world into confusion. There are seasons when we must even conceal the truth."

"I can not abide your lies and deceptions," was Luther's attitude; "I do not go into the struggle because I want to do it, but God helping me, I will make no compromise with falsehood, and I am willing to die for speaking, but I am not willing to be silent before wrong."

God has enemies as well as friends. He loves men, but He hates sin. The very capacities for love in God involve capacities for hate. Jesus also hated as well as loved, and found the joy of life in both.

"Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness:
Therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee
With the oil of gladness above Thy fellows."

Sin appeared to Him in all its hideousness. He saw its infinite and horrible ravages in the human nature He had assumed and was trying to redeem. As He looked out upon men

"Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings,"

and compared their life with His, as he struggled to make His truth intelligent to their sin-distorted minds, as He laid the thrilling love of His Father upon their hearts and found them torpid, and God's life upon their souls and found them dead, as He spoke with the unmistakable voice

of the true shepherd to the sheep and discovered that sin had slain their capacity to recognise it, He took in all the wickedness, the ruin, the deadly defilement of sin, and He loathed it with all His soul.

He flung Satan from Him. He denounced him as the father of lies. He fought him to the death, and He welcomed the cross with its shame as the triumphant instrument for slaying the sin of the world which He hated without restraint. And for His hate of this and His love of man, He was willing to live and die.

Now, if Jesus thus hated as well as loved, we may be sure that our life can not be filled with love alone. We shall have to have foes as well as friends. There are those who assure us that it need not be so. They tell us to think only of the admirations of life, to ignore the detestations. But this does not show a keen knowledge of human nature. The antagonising faculties of men are stronger than their admiring faculties. Get access to the hearts of boys and you will find

that what quickens the pulse of the boy, wakens his energies, and commands his will, is the thought of struggle. The feeble moralists regret that it is so. So does the devil. But we are as we are, and God deals with us as we are. He knows that we need admirations and He provides them. He knows that we need detestations and He points to sin and says, Behold your foe!

It is true that love of the holy and noble must be the dominant thought of life, and that hatred of the unworthy and evil must not usurp the whole of life. But it must be there as the background and buttress of the love of the good. There can be no guarantee that the front of life will be safe save in the protection of the rear, and life can reach up into the good only by mounting upon and trampling down the evil. If men just play with evil and look with negative indifference on sin, they walk in peril greater than they know. The man who would be serene must combine, as Robertson of Brighton did, "a hatred and resistance of evil and

a reverence and effort for purity." "Hate the evil, and love the good," cries the prophet Amos, and on such a life of double power he is sure "the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious."

Because sin in its abstract form can not come to us, we are to hate it in its concrete manifestations. Let us look upon these as our legitimate foes, and plan our life not as a search for beauty and purity only, but, of necessity and for the very reason that we are earnest in our desire for beauty and purity, as a campaign against these definite adversaries.

Sin comes to us in books and pictures. Do not touch the books and pictures in which sin comes, if they belong to others. Destroy them if they are yours. Sin comes in certain places. They warm the heart toward sin's approaches. Flee from such places. Sin lures us with the pleasure of certain acts, small at first and solitary. Smite it, oh, smite it! Sin comes creeping to us in a thousand ways. Hurl it out into the night of which it is the exhalation.

But are we to hurt persons and antagonise them? What are persons? Immortal spirits diversely manifesting themselves, often inconsistently, opposite passions and inclinations contending for the mastery. We can not take the same attitude toward all of these diverse elements. What is good and worthy we can admire. The immortality which is revealed in all we are to respect and love. All that is evil and wrong we are to hate, and if the person will not be dissevered from the evil that defiles, if he resolutely and willfully commits himself to the service of evil, we are to oppose him. As John Willis Gleed says, though it is a course needing great caution and prayer, "When a man has proved himself a thorough-paced scoundrel, treat him like one, affront him, oppose him, risk something, risk all, to break down his influence. to terminate his career; do this and you will feel a happiness inside you that is royal—and you will be as one among a thousand."

Bad men who are doing evil and lov-

ing evil are not to be treated by us as sincere but weak men who are led mistakenly astray. One of the curses of society now is that a man may often be an adulterer, a gambler, a public curse, and yet be received as though he were innocent and honest. That Christian life which slurs over the immorality of such men as though it were not is an invertebrate thing. They are the foes of Christ. They can not be our friends.

In the simple, quiet life of most Christians perhaps no questions of great difficulty will arise. Sin will present itself in impersonal ways, and can be despised and fought just as sin. But in all Christian lives there must be the capacity at least for sympathy with the heart of the Psalmist, who wrote:—

"I hate them that are of a wicked mind;
But Thy law do I love.
Through Thy precepts I get understanding:
Therefore I hate every false way.
I hate and abhor falsehood,
But Thy law do I love."

We may never fall into lukewarmness toward evil or evil men. There is no power or safety for us but in a heart cold toward the enticements of wrong, and hot in resentment against it. Our prayer must be the prayer the boys of Phillips Andover and Hotchkiss are taught to pray: "O God, whom none can love except they hate the thing that is evil, and who willest by Thy Son, our Saviour, to redeem us from all iniquity, deliver us when we are tempted to look on sin without abhorrence, and let the virtue of His passion come between us and the enemy of our souls, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen."

XII

CHRISTIAN THINKING

One curious characteristic of our day is the divorce of opinion from character. It is assumed that men can perceive the truth in thought regardless of whether they are true in life. The proper tone of discussion and intercourse is impersonal, questions of moral attitude and personal life being reserved from scrutiny. There is undoubtedly some justification of this. It is much easier to get along in this way, and those who dislike to have their inmost character too publicly exposed can be much more cheerful in such a world. Politics becomes, for example, a more comfortable field for activity when it is held to be improper to introduce questions of moral character, and when a man is given credit for opinion which has no guarantee in the fibre of his moral

nature. Unregenerate men write books on theology, and in some countries even hold theological chairs, while the man who writes the religious editorials on a great daily may himself be an intemperate and irreligious man. It is easy to call this hypocrisy, but it is quite adequately sanctioned by the spirit of our day. A man of orthodox opinion may be marked by much uncharitableness and bitterness of nature, and a man of amiable nature by much dishonest slovenliness of opinion, and each be unconscious of his defect, or cover it with the mantle of his possessed virtue.

The true Christian will have done with this immoral separation of thought and character. How can a man think true who is false? Men do what they do and think what they think because they are what they are. Our minds are not mechanisms which work with mathematical precision irrespective of our personal dispositions. They are ourselves, and all that we are shapes them. We shall see this emphasised more and more among

Christians, however difficult it makes living. Truth is personal and vital, and not merely opinion. Ritschl was right at least in insisting upon the religious values of doctrines and refusing to build systems out of bloodless propositions. And Paul was right in anchoring thought in being, and in leaping at some defect of shortcoming or excess in character or life, where he found defect in opinion. Paul preached what he was and had experienced.

"There is no beauty," as Professor Royce says, "no, nor any truth, in a metaphysical system which does not spring from its value as a record of a spiritual experience." And the Christian must test his opinion on the touchstone of his character, and refuse to recognise the thinking faculties as independent of the moral and emotional life.

The Christian, while thus cordially surrendering much of what is now called the freedom of opinion, will become in reality much freer in his opinions. He will smile at a great many unexamined

dicta which now rule men. Such a half truth, for example, as our proverb, "Knowledge is power," he will cheerfully denounce as a half lie. All knowledge is not power. Some ignorance is vastly more powerful than some knowledge. There is, as Milton says, a

> "Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill,"

and sometimes the price to a true-souled man is prohibitive. Charles Lamb did not exhaust the list of "popular fallacies."

And the paradoxes and present difficulties of religious opinion will have fewer terrors for us. If, as is certainly true, our personal life can not absorb the infinite God, neither can our intellectual nature comprehend and exhaust Him. Why should our failure to do so occasion us the least concern or distress? It would be distressing rather to think through God, so to speak, and come out on the other side with no more object of thought beyond. It lies in the very idea

of God that He is greater than we. We shall not be so ambitious that we can not be satisfied with a God greater than our thoughts. And so, further, the necessary antinomies of thought, when we reason out of our experience into the transcendent, will give us no perplexity. We shall smilingly accept them and over the greatest one of them shall say.

"Our wills are ours we know not how,
Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

Not in the least disconcerted by these paradoxes over which our fathers quarrelled, insisting on believing only one side or the other, instead of both, we shall not be in anywise disturbed by the honest search of honest and humble-hearted men for light and truth. The light and truth of God are seeking men more eagerly than any man can seek them, and they are not to be feared. And as for prideful and untrue search, it will be as incapable of finding new as it is of discrediting or destroying old truth. And of how little consequence in reality is that

which is to be found in comparison with what has been found already! The foundations were laid long ago and are neither to be shaken nor to be relaid. As Harnack has said, in "Christianity and History": "The great and simple truths which Christ came to preach, the personal sacrifice which He made and His victory in death were what formed the new life of His community; and when the apostle Paul, with divine power, described this life as a life in the Spirit, and again as a life in love, he was only giving back the light which had dawned upon him in and through Jesus Christ, his Lord."

We are feeling the influence of a healthy reaction against the attempt to codify the universe in a human system. Our God, who is great enough to be beyond our levelling comprehension, is great enough to extend beyond our systems. Not one man out of a hundred thousand can carry his system of complete religious speculation with him, and not one out of a thousand can sit

down and write it out articulately. But this emancipation from the attempts at the impossible which only mechanicalise and devitalise our religious thought will not excuse us from honest study or deliver us to an intellectual license. That thought is to be personal and vital is no excuse for its ceasing to be thought. It is easy to plead what is practical as an excuse from what is thorough.

The Christian man must think himself. He will look at evidence with wide open, level eyes, and neither party cries, nor the taunt of those whose inclinations provide them with prejudices which pass for opinions, nor indolence will befog his thought or make him satisfied to accept impressions of his own, or assertions of others as the accredited truth. He will give heed to the objects of thought which Paul specifies in the last chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, but he will remember, also, that on these things Paul bade men to do some thinking, and that the point of his admonition is lost if all

the emphasis is laid on "these things" and none on "think."

The immense mechanical and scientific changes of our day often tempt men to think that very little is established and unmoved, and that all things are uncertain. The right temper of mind is alert progressiveness, welcoming change, ready to perceive and greet each fresh advance. It is not hard to exaggerate this into an easy contempt for what has been. And some suppose the temper of the coming day will be yet more progressive and free from the constraint of the past. It may be earnestly hoped that it will not be so. What is all that has been discovered during our day compared with what was known before?

All the fresh inventions and new knowledge are valuable, but before they came true men hated lies, and true hearts loved, and there were gentleness and unselfishness and strong service among men. And these secrets are more than mechanical invention and improvements

in the arts. The best part of knowledge was here in our fathers' day and the days of their fathers before them. And the coming men will understand this and not lose their heads in the idolatry of innovation. The faith was once given to the saints, and once for all, and though men will understand it better from age to age it is still the old faith of divine love and human duty.

Let us hope that the thought of the future will prove more modest. We are but little creatures, reading ourselves into the placid universe which was before us and will be after us, save as we discover our littleness in ourselves and wake to our greatness in God. Our thoughts must be humble and contrite as our hearts.

We may be sure, too, that however the influences of education may appear now to be working toward mechanical rationalism of thought, they will not succeed in killing the bloom and drying the blood of life. "Religious thinking, ethical thinking, poetical thinking, teleogical, emo-

tional, sentimental thinking,, what we might call the personal view of life, to distinguish it from the impersonal and mechanical, and the romantic view of life, to distinguish it from the rationalistic view, have been," as Professor James says, "and still are, outside of well-drilled scientific circles, the dominant forms of thought." There will be a battle necessary to keep them so. The machine shop view of life, which some of our best institutions are devoting their energies to establish and extend, is gaining sway over the virtues of men, killing their spring and beauty, and even over the vices of men, too, destroying their hideousness and making for them a philosophic defense as the springs of a richer human experience. Against all this true Christians will erect the fragrant, poetical, personal, divinely moral thought of life for which Jesus stood, and of which He is ever the fountain and the guarantee.

Our Lord Jesus Christ will be the norm of Christian thought. "I am the

Truth," He is still saying. And the true Christian will bring every thought into captivity to His obedience and will discover therein perfect liberty, and heavenly vision and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden. He will bring his mind to Christ that he may make the mind that was in Christ his own.

XIII

A CHRISTIAN'S THOUGHTS

We are not always acting, but we are always thinking. Yet we watch our acts, and shape them carefully lest they be wrong and, by their evil, influence us to greater evil. Because they are external, however, and because they are occasional, they scarcely mold us as our thoughts mold us, which are most intimate with us and never are absent from us. Whoever would deal with what most deeply concerns his personal life, must deal with his thoughts. "He that would govern his actions by the laws of virtue," wrote Dr. Samuel Johnson, "must regulate his thoughts by those of reason; he must keep guilt from the recesses of his heart, and remember that the pleasures of fancy and the emotions of desire are more dangerous as they are

hidden, since they escape the sense of observation, and operate equally in every situation, without the concurrence of external opportunities."

This was what Jesus told the Pharisees and scribes. They were most careful about matters of purely external behavior, conformity to petty, exacting standards of propriety and conduct. He bade them to give heed to the real source of evil and weakness in life. "The things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts: . . . but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man." We are full of care for the outer crust of life. Jesus is heedless of it. He goes straight to its core. What men do, He knows, will be determined by what they are in the inmost chambers of their imagination and desire. Even though the outer acts be for a time blameless, the life is unworthy if there is unworthiness in its secret places. Nor can it long confine and conceal the unworthiness

there. But even if it could, it would be unworthy to have anything that could not be revealed. Marcus Aurelius held this high ideal. "Accustom yourself," he said, "to think upon nothing but what you could freely reveal, if the question were put to you; so that if your soul were laid open, there would appear nothing but what was sincere, good-natured, and public spirited—not so much as one voluptuous or luxurious fancy, nothing of hatred, envy, or unreasonable suspicion, nor aught else that you could not bring to the light without blushing."

Every day we are becoming more like our thoughts. If they are mean and selfish, we can not prevent ourselves from becoming so. If they are unclean and evil, our character and conduct will inevitably be shaped by them. It is true that "as a man thinketh in his heart so is he." As Charles Kingsley says: "Think about yourself; about what you want, what you like, what respect people ought to pay you, and then to you nothing will be pure. You will spoil ev-

erything you touch; you will make sin and misery for yourself out of everything which God sends you; you will be as wretched as you choose, on earth or in heaven either." And on the other hand, loving thoughts will produce loving acts, and a generous, kindly way of regarding others in our own minds will bring us to a generous, kindly treatment of them in daily life.

We have to think, whether we choose to do so or not. As Sir W. Temple says, "Man is a thinking being, whether he will or no; all he can do is to turn his thoughts the best way." As soon as we wake in the morning our thoughts begin. We cannot stop thinking any minute during the day. The attempt to stop is a sure way to make the mind more active still.

Of what shall we think? Satan is always suggesting evil thoughts. Often in our best hours, in prayer or even at the Lord's Supper, some wrong imagination will flash upon us. We can not understand why it should have come. We can

prevent its staying with us. "I can not prevent foul birds from flying over my head," said an old Christian, "but I can prevent them from building their nests in my hair." And how may such evil thoughts be driven away? Not by fighting with them. The more we wrestle with them the tighter they grip us.

They can only be driven away by displacement. We can thrust them out with good thoughts. This was the way John Bunyan, as he tells us, came to write "Pilgrim's Progress."

> "Nor did I intend
> But to divert myself in doing this
> From worser thoughts, which make me do amiss."

When an evil imagination or a frivolous or envious thought or a sinful coveting or any wrong desire comes into the mind, ignore it and turn your mind at once upon some stronger and nobler object fitted to command and captivate your thoughts. This was Lewis Carroll's

counsel. He wrote, explaining his motive in writing "Pillow Problems": "Perhaps I may venture for a moment to use a more serious tone and to point out that there are mental troubles much worse than mere worry, for which an absorbing object of thought may serve as a remedy. There are skeptical thoughts which seem for the moment to uproot the firmest faith; there are blasphemous thoughts which dart unbidden into the most reverent souls; there are unholy thoughts which torture with their hateful presence the fancy that would fain be pure. Against all these some real mental work is a most helpful ally. That 'unclean spirit' of the parable, who brought back with him seven others more wicked than himself, only did so because he found the chamber 'swept and garnished' and its owner sitting with folded hands. Had he found it all alive with the 'busy hum' of active 'work' there would have been scant welcome for him and his seven." Obey Paul's injunction to "bring every thought into obedience to the captivity of Christ."

He is able to subdue all our thoughts, and to expel from them everything that can not live in His presence.

Our thoughts are our innermost life. We carry them with us and can not escape from them. In them we can have always the richest companionships. "They are never alone," says Sir Philip Sidney, "that are accompanied with noble thoughts." Or we may have in them the most wretched associates from whom we can not flee. Have you learned to be content when alone with your own mind? or do you flee from such solitude, seeking something to divert you or to occupy you? Jesus had no fear of being alone. He could sit for hours on the hillside looking out over the fields and the streams and the distant sea. The flowers at His feet held

"Thoughts that did often lie too deep for tears,"

and spoke to Him of the care and the perfect workmanship of the Father. The winds suggested to Him the unseen mov-

ings of the Divine Spirit. Yonder little lambs and the sheep, and the shepherd bearing in his arms the weak ones of the flock, spoke to His heart of that Shepherd love and care which found its best illustration in Him. Life was not an empty, prosaic thing to Jesus. It can be a rich joy to us if we love to think, and to think especially about all the meanings of God.

One great mistake which we make in our thoughts lies in our willingness to let them drift or settle upon ourselves. We think of our plans, our possessions, our moods, our acts, our failures. Sometimes we do this with deliberate attention, and again our minds just wander hither because there is no strong hand on the tiller guiding them elsewhere. Now drifting is a bad thing in every part of our lives, and it is bad and damaging in our thoughts. It takes away the power of application and sustained reasoning and it usually ends in our filling our thoughts with what is unworthy.

God is the proper object of our thought. "We must converse with our-

selves only of God," says Pascal. We should love to fix our minds on Him and to think of His goodness, His love, His great deeds for us, and His constant present interest in us. We think of our love of God or of our service of God. It is right to do this sometimes, but it is certain to depress and belittle us if our thoughts are true; for how cold is our love of God, and how poor is our service! On the other hand, it is an expansive and ennobling thing to meditate upon the greatness of God's love for us and the splendid breadth and depth of His service for us. If, as Marcus Aurelius says, "Our life is what our thoughts make it," then the surest road to godliness is to think upon God and to do this attentively.

Yet few of us can be always holding our thoughts under strict rule. They will drift away to their own place. What is that place with us? With some it may be fashions of dress, with others investments, with others books, with others vices, with others friends. Wherever

our treasure is there our heart and our thoughts will be. If Christ is our true treasure, He will be the natural place of our thoughts, and whenever released from the pressure of this or that absorbing duty, they will slip away to Him. He is far better than any thing or any other person to think upon, and He has that compelling power which holds us in a captivity as strong as it is sweet.

Have you thought of Jesus once today? Each day should begin with sweet thoughts of Christ, and there should be set times in it for recalling Him, and He should have the last thoughts of all. By such discipline, at last even our dreams may gather round Him. In truth, very few people ever dream of Christ, because few think enough about Him during the day. But life becomes a new thing when Jesus wins lordship over its unordered thoughts and the mind turns to Him as its true resting place and home. And He is Himself the source of all fair and sweet things.

The great counsel of Paul, "Whatso-

ever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. iv: 8), may be reduced for us to the simple rule, Think on Christ. That is the conclusion of the whole matter. And it is the beginning of such blessed things as few know.

XIV

THE PLACE AND POWER OF HABITS

LIFE is of necessity a large part habit. As soon as we begin to live we begin to form habits. Breathing becomes an unconscious custom, and moves smoothly on by day and by night. We fall into innumerable personal ways that are peculiar to us alone, and betray us. Acts done at first at random, or with but occasional will, are repeated until the habit of doing them becomes set with us. A moment's thought upon our life will show each of us

"How use doth breed a habit in a man."

And how much of our life is made up of unthinking obedience to such habits. "Habit," says Carlyle, "is the deepest law of human nature."

Jesus had His habits. He made it His habit to do always the will of His Father. He had acquired the custom of going to the Nazareth synagogue on Sabbaths and reading the Scripture lessons. Luke iv: 16. It was His wont to talk to the people when they gathered to Him. Mark x: 1. And there were certain places where it was His habit to go with regularity. Luke xxii: 39.

Our habits hold for us the secret of joy and liberty, or of sorrow and slavery in life. On the one hand by carelessness or by the deliberate choice of evil acts, one after another, we can bind ourselves in the most hopeless bondage. The terrible thing about such servitude is the insidiousness of its approach. As Dryden says:

"Ill habits gather by unseen degrees,—
As brooks make rivers, rivers run to seas."

An evil imagination or wrong desire is cherished once. The second time it comes back more easily and lingers longer. The third time resistance is

feebler still. Soon all struggle ceases and the freedom of purity is gone. It is so also with unholy or unlovely acts. As John Foster says in his Journal, "The mind is weak where it has once given way. It is long before a principle restored can become as firm as one that has never been moved. It is as the case of the mound of a reservoir; if the mound has in one place been broken, whatever care has been taken to make the repaired part as strong as possible, the probability is that if it gives way again, it will be in that place." Bishop Whately also speaks of this: "It is important to keep in mind that habits are formed, not at one stroke, but gradually and insensibly; so that unless vigilant care be employed, a great change may come over the character without our being conscious of any. For, as Doctor Johnson has well expressed it, 'The diminutive chains of habit are seldom heavy enough to be felt, till they are too strong to be broken.'"

The only sure ways to conquer evil

habits are to frustrate them in their beginning, and to occupy the ground with good. To escape the habit of evil thoughts, do not read books or look at pictures which suggest them. To escape the habit of fault-finding, of uncharitable judgments, refuse to discover or to dwell upon the defects of others. Every habit begins as an act. Even if the first battle is lost make a great deal of it, and enter the next one with indomitable purpose, and do not lose that one. A victory there will hurl the incipient habit back upon itself in ruin. "Those who are in the power of evil habits must conquer as they can,—and conquered they must be, or neither wisdom nor happiness can be attained;—but those who are not yet subject to their influence may, by timely caution, preserve their freedom; they may effectually resolve to escape the tyrant whom they will very vainly resolve to conquer."

But how can evil habits be conquered when once formed? Well, if Christ is to save men He must be able to save them

here. He sharpens the discernment of the act which lies at the root of the habit, and He begins in the will of His disciple a battle against such acts, taken one by one. But beyond that, He begins a rear attack on evil habit by pushing out upon the ground thus occupied the forces of good habit. Against the habit of evil thought He leads the will in a resolute struggle with each separate suggestion as it creeps up out of the swamps like miasma; but, also, He creates the habit of sweet thought upon Christ, who is the most compelling object of thought our minds can know. By and by we become strong enough to defeat habit in part by taking its soldiers one by one, when, lo! the army of our adversary is gone, for the host of good habit from behind has cleared the field.

It is a splendid truth that good habits grow just as bad habits grow, by easy and unconscious increase. A Christian boy refuses to lie. Again the temptation comes, and he refuses with steady heart. Again the temptation

knocks, but the lad never hears. His habit of truthfulness has made the temptation to lie no temptation to him. And this is the liberty of noble habit. It lifts us above all the temptations whose victory over us would result in the contrary habits of evil. A pure home, pure friends, pure books, and a pure heart, carry the man who has been blessed with them through defilement and stain, and they never touch his spirit. He scarcely knows that he has been surrounded by them.

There is a sort of automatic moral integrity about upright habits. They make evil actions impossible. The man who is set in such habits has no need to think over and reason out his course of action. His moral conscience is so clear in its integrity that it acts for him spontaneously. When a true man is solicited to do evil, firm habit takes him by force and wheels him about, and before he knows it has swept him out of harm's way. The man is in danger who has to reason over the simple question of truth and purity.

If truth and purity have become habits of his will they will act before he can think. Good habit makes the elementary problems of the moral life nondebatable and the primary moral judgments instantaneous and irresistible.

This is the liberty of good habits which contrasts with the slavery of evil habit. This is what Lord Brougham had in mind when he said: "I trust everything under God, to habit, upon which, in all of us, the lawgiver as well as the schoolmaster has mainly placed his reliance; habit which makes everything easy and casts all difficulties upon the deviation from a wonted course. Make sobriety a habit, and intemperance will be hateful; make prudence a habit, and reckless profligacy will be as contrary to the nature of the child, grown or adult, as the most atrocious crimes are to any of us." Doing good, telling the truth, loving the clean, hating the foul, soon become habits, and the temptations to selfishness, to falsehood, to impurity, fall off from us without awaking in us the least response.

Habit is not a matter of the intellectual or moral life alone. We acquire spiritual habits also. Prayer can become a habit. Prayerlessness can become a habit. The sense of God's presence can become an habitual consciousness. We can drift into the habit of forgetfulness of God. We can acquire the habit of Bible love and Bible study, or can habitually neglect the Book whose neglect means starvation of soul. Men have trained themselves into the habit of materialism. To them no fact is a fact that is not a physical fact. Other men have acquired the habit of perceiving the spiritual significance of all things and of reading life in terms of the spirit. We can slip into the habit of self-will, or we can learn to sing truly to God—

"To do Thy will the habit of my heart."

The very purpose of the Spirit of God in dealing with us is to school us into the habits of Christ; not to spur us to an isolated act of righteousness, but to establish us in holy and noble ways.

Indeed, Christianity was from the beginning called a way, *i. e.,* a custom, a habit. Jesus taught "the ways of God." He called Himself "The Way." Paul spoke of the new teachings as "that way." He had himself, when he became a Christian, certain "ways in Christ," which he taught everywhere in every church. Christianity is the habit of love, the habit of service, the habit of righteousness, the habit of holiness. It is not a spasm of sentiment, or of activity. It is a character of truth and purity wrought by the Spirit of Christ out of those habits which are the ways of Jesus.

Each one of us is strengthening every day his habits of body, mind, and spirit; and these habits are every day making or undoing us. We have in them an enginery of almost limitless power for evil or for good. We make choice between the ways of God and the ways of sin. We do this in each act, and the multitude of such choices creates a habit; and these ways have their ends, and the end of the habit of sin is death, and the end of the

way of God is life. Yea, and more than this. What lies at the end of each way lies along each way. The death that is the end of the habit of evil is in each act of evil; and the life that is in the end of the habit of good is in each act of good. Our habits bring us at the last to that which is in principle in each separate act by which the habit was formed, and in which it expresses itself.

The only way for each disciple of Christ is the way of God, the way of holiness; that is the way of those who hear the call to divine habits in the words of Jesus, "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

XV

CHRISTIAN FEELING

If one sets forth the legitimacy of religious feeling, it is not through any desire to discredit thought, but only to claim for the feelings a place which is rightly theirs, but from which many are seeking to exclude them, partly because of their admitted dangers of excess, and partly because of an undue exaltation of our opinionative nature. By what right is our whole personality, emotional and volitional, subjected to opinion? Who has demonstrated that opinion is the infallible guide? Who has proved that feeling has led more men astray than opinion? Opinion is not the cool, unbiassed, infallible thing the temper of our day supposes it. There is, at least, as much intellectual heresy and insanity current as emotional.

I am not trying to make out a case for the superiority of any one part of our life over another, least of all to the disadvantage of thought as the necessary check and balance wheel of life; but merely representing that the narrow-minded and unphilosophical course is that of those who would turn us into scientific thinking machines, with emotion and will and all the richness of our personality in perpetual ostracism. If they succeeded we should have a very prosaic time sitting on the crust of life, with dust in our veins instead of blood. Not so!

"Thought is deeper than all speech,
Feeling deeper than all thought;
Souls to souls can never teach
What unto themselves was taught.

"We are spirits clad in veils;
Man by man was never seen;
All our deep communing fails
To remove the shadowy screen."

We need not then be ashamed of our feelings or conceal them or endeavor to discredit or suppress them. As Pascal

says, "The heart has reasons which the reason does not know. It is the heart that feels God, not the reason. There are truths that are felt, and there are truths that are proved, for we know truth not only by the reason, but by that instinctive conviction which may be called the heart. The primary truths are not demonstrable, and yet our knowledge of them is none the less certain. Principles are felt; propositions are proved. Truths may be above reason, and yet not be contrary to reason." Feeling should be given its just place as an organ of knowledge, supplying its own measure, correcting the error of the opinionative nature, and saving us to our real life. With what one of us has it not done this?

"If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
I heard a voice, 'Believe no more,'
And heard an ever breaking shore
That tumbled in the godless deep;

"A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath, the *heart*
Stood up and answered, 'I have felt!'"

There is a constant oscillation in life between the extreme of emphasis on the objective fact recognised by reason, and the extreme of emphasis on the subjective fact recognised by feeling. But the true life is the one that never loses either emphasis. Jesus is the historic Saviour of man and the present Lord of life, unconditioned as to His existence by any personal recognition by man. And the work that He did and is doing is in one aspect an objective work, independent of human acceptance and experience. But He is also the present indwelling Life, apprehended by a range of faculties not exercised upon the material world, and the true Christian knows Him in a true and precious mysticism.

The word "mysticism" should not terrify Christians. And no charge of emotional excess and unreliability, or of disregard of the objective foundations of spiritual truth, or, to use Law's words, "of setting up an inward Saviour in opposition to that outward Christ whose history is recorded in the Gospel" should

dismay him. For, to quote Law's reply: "Was I to say that a plant, a vegetable, must have the sun within it, must have the life, light and virtues of the sun incorporated in it, that it has no benefit from the sun till the sun is thus inwardly forming, generating, quickening and raising up a life of the sun's virtues in it, would this be setting up an inward sun in opposition to the outward one? Could anything be more ridiculous than such a charge? For is not all that is here said of an inward sun in the vegetable so much said of a power and virtue derived from the sun in the firmament? So, in like manner, all that is said of an inward Christ, inwardly formed and generated in the root of the soul, is only so much said of an inward life, brought forth by the power and efficacy of that blessed Christ who was born of the Virgin Mary."

Unconcealedly yielding to Christ the rule of his feelings, he who is Christ's should desire to resemble Christ in his feelings. The moral must transcend

the æsthetic in his tastes. If what he believes to be true and what the world believes to be beautiful conflict, he will prefer his truth to its beauty. "Fair" with him will be the synonym of "pure."

He will combine if he can a right independence with a delicate sensitiveness. One of the sayings of the late Master of Balliol, preserved in his "Letters," was that "sensitiveness is a great hindrance to action—other men who have their own ends in view and perceive that you are sensitive will not desist from hurting you. It may be partly overcome. It has some compensating advantages. One enters more into the thoughts of other people." "F——," wrote General Gordon to his sister, "is more humble and better tempered than I am, and in consequence he is sometimes bullied about things, so tell him to stick up more." To combine these things—a virile strength of assertion and a gentle sensitiveness—will be a hard task, not likely to be attempted by any outside of Christ's school, but obligatory upon those within.

They will be praying always, "In the gentleness of Christ, O Christ, my soul array," but also, "Help me to quit myself like a man and be strong."

A great wretchedness of much of our present religious feeling is its excess of self-consciousness. We feel and then we feel that we feel. This kills naturalness. The autobiographical analysis feeds this sort of thing, and the tone of our commonplace conversation, so much about people, cultivates the habit of self-consideration. Somehow we shall have to learn how to keep the proper checks on feeling and yet have it natural and free. The rule of great principles over the feeling will help us here. When we love what is worthy with a controlling love, we shall think not of our love, but of the worthiness of its object. And, on the other hand, great hatreds will absorb in loathing of the hateful thing all half-theatrical consciousness of self.

And there will be more and more need of great hatreds. Our talk of charity and tolerance must not blind us to the

call for bitterness and wrath against all unrighteousness and ungodliness. The true Christian must know how to feel contempt as well as admiration and detestation as well as love. It is related of old Joshua Leavitt that once he greeted an advocate of the free love abomination who came to see him with the words, "Sir, I abhor you, I abhor you, I abhor you." "Do not I hate them which hate Thee?" asks David, and replies, "Yea, I hate them with perfect hatred." It was wrong to hate them as persons, but it was wrong to do other than hate their hatred of God. Soft and easy toleration of everything will be called by the honest names of treason and dishonor. To apologise for lust and sin is to become partner with it, and every Christian will feel a holy horror of all such guilt and an utter anger against all that worketh abomination or that maketh a lie. No feeling of love for the pure can long survive a decadence of the feeling of hatred of the impure.

The dominant characteristic of the

right feelings of Christians is not new. It is simply the Christian passion of all the ages—a great tenderness towards Christ, a love of His beauty and His gentleness. "It seems to me," says one of Miss Fowler's characters, "that nowadays men think and talk too much about improving their own characters and meditate too little upon the perfection of the Divine Character." We shall in the coming time think more of Him in humility and human love, and perhaps we can succeed in escaping from the lofty ambitiousness of our present days into the trustfulness of a child's ways and speak and feel towards Christ as Father Tabb's little Child on Calvary:

"The cross is tall
And I too small,
To reach His hand
Or touch His feet;
But on the sand
His footprints I have found,
And it is sweet
To kiss the holy ground."

XVI

THE SELFISHNESS OF SORROW

The Saviour, who constantly forgot Himself for the sake of men, found Himself constantly forgotten by men for their own sakes. In the Garden of Gethsemane, "when the world was most in need of a loyal Master, and when loyalty cost an unspeakable price, Christ was true. When the Master was most in need of friends, and when friendship was made easy and almost inevitable by the tender solicitations of the divine sufferer, the disciples were false." And before He came to Gethsemane, while He in His sorrow thought upon the sorrows of His disciples, they in their sorrow forgot to think upon His. "None of you asketh me, Whither goest Thou?" he says sadly. "But because I have spoken these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart."

Their thought fixed itself upon their own immediate loss. They forgot to ask how their separation affected Christ.

The disciples revealed in this the natural selfishness of sorrow. We appear to mourn for others. Really we are mourning for ourselves. What fills our thought is the meaning to us of the separation between them and us, not its meaning to them. A Christian dies. His death is a great loss to those who loved him, and to the community in which he lived. His death is an infinite gain to him. He has gone to be with Christ, which is far better. From his face the Father wipes all tears away. Which consideration determines the emotions and conduct of the man's friends? They weep and lament, regretting what has taken place, and bewailing it with grief. The shades are drawn in the house. People pass softly to and fro, and the sound of crying is heard. A gloomy funeral, moving sadly to the grave, is the dark end of all. What a pageantry of selfishness! It is a protest against

the coronation of a soul, against the meeting of a disciple with his Lord. For their sakes his friends would have kept a child of God from the glorious home to which, for his sake, the Father has called him lovingly.

And the same disposition to be selfish in our sorrow is displayed in lesser things. Some people are scarcely happy unless they are unhappy. If they are not abused and disliked, they fear they are in danger of the woe pronounced upon those of whom "all men shall speak well." There is a self-satisfaction, a self-praise, which such evil treatment enables us to feel, which we cherish secretly. But here, too, it is of ourselves we are thinking, and not of those who thus abuse us. It is right that we should sorrow, but it should be with a sad, outreaching sympathy for those who know not what they do. The comfortable sense of being wronged should give place to a yearning love for evil-doers which would forget self.

But sorrow finds it hard to forget self.

The very emotions of sorrow are sweet to the selfish heart. And very great saints may be among the most selfish of men in this. A little thought shows how large a place they themselves play in their sorrow, and how their very sorrow supplies a selfish sweetness to them. Thus St. Augustine dissects his feelings on the death of a friend: "At this grief my heart was utterly darkened, and whatever I beheld was death. My native country was a torment to me, and my father's house a strange unhappiness; and whatever I had shared with him for lack of him became a ghastly torture. . . . Only tears were sweet to me, and took my friend's place in my heart's affections. And now, Lord, these things are passed by, and time hath assuaged my wound. May I learn from Thee . . . why weeping is pleasant to the wretched? . . . Whence, then, is sweet fruit gathered from the bitterness of life, from groaning, sighing, and complaining? . . . I wept most bitterly and found my rest in bitterness. Then

was I wretched, and even that wretched life I held dearer than my friend." This is self deriving pleasure and relief from the contemplation of its wretchedness.

Something of the same sort may be seen constantly in children. A child observed, and conscious of observance, will cry at what, if alone, it will not notice at all. In the latter case, so far as anything attracts the child's notice, it is the act itself. In the former, it is the child as the subject of the act. The sense of self-consciousness gives birth to a sorrow that the child in the health of naturalness can not feel. And do not many tears shed at funerals spring from the same self-consciousness of sorrow? In heathen lands mourners are hired to weep, and, in the presence of the company who expect it of them, do weep and wail with a sorrow as real as much of ours.

So predominant is the element of selfishness in our sorrow that our very dictionaries define it as "distress of mind caused by misfortune, injury, loss, disappointment, or the like;" "the uneasiness

or pain of mind which is produced by the loss of any good, real or supposed." Poets sing of it as "remembering happier things," and philosophers, like Locke, describe it as "uneasiness in the mind upon the thought of a good lost which might have been enjoyed longer, or the sense of a present evil."

There is a nobler sorrow. The Man of Sorrows sorrowed for others, not for Himself. He did not grieve at His pains for men, but at the sins of men, which cursed and blinded them. There was in Him no morbid or ascetic gratification at pain and loss. He accepted them for the sake of men. The sorrows which made Him the Man of Sorrows were the sorrows of men which He took upon Himself,—the very consequences of their evil and wrong. This was the Messianic glory. He was the unselfish sorrower.

And among men there are sorrows like Christ's. He was grieved at the hardness of men's hearts. He wondered, in Mr. Ruskin's words, not at what men suffered, but at what they lost, and He sorrowed

for them. When we sorrow for the sinner who will not be free from his sin, for the little child who suffers from pinching hunger and biting cold, for the rich man whose greatest need is the consciousness of need, for the people who kill their redeemers and know not what they do, for the seeking soul repulsed by those to whom it comes in its trust, for those who can live on the trades and ministries of death,—whenever we sorrow, not because of our loss or disappointment, but because we feel the loss and disappointment of others, we too become men of sorrows of the heart and mind of the Man.

There is a sense in which sorrow may be nobly selfish. That is when it works nobly for the purification of self, when its essence is the recognition of defects and shortcomings in self which are displeasing to God, and must be removed. Such godly sorrow, though it spring from what is regretful, worketh unto a salvation which bringeth no regret. But if sorrow is only the distress of mind caused by the sense of loss, touched by no redemptive

power, no outreaching toward reparation, it is mean with the littleness and the deteriorating weakness of self.

Whether the sorrow of men is worthy and Christlike is shown by the cures they propose for it. When they call it "a kind of rust of the soul which every new idea contributes, in its passage, to scour away," as Dr. Samuel Johnson does, or hold, with Publius Syrus, that "patience is a remedy for every sorrow," they show that they mean by sorrow some selfish sense of loss. When men mean by it a sad sense of what others are losing, they set about its cure, as Jesus did, by bearing the sorrows of men so as to bear them away, and by offering to the lives of men what they lack.

There is ample room in our lives for sorrow over our own sins. There is no room for sorrow over the dealings of God with us. Those dealings are always for our good, whatever they take away from us or bring to us, and sorrow over them is especially unworthy and wrong when it is a protest, not only against God's will

for us, but also against His loving plan for others. When He takes His children home, it is all gain and blessing for them. The rebellion which finds expression in the remonstrance of our grief is selfishness such as Jesus gently reproved when He reminded the disciples that their thoughts were wholly of themselves, and negligent of Him, as He spoke to them of His departure to His Father and their Father, to His God and their God. They were giving up nothing in comparison with the Father's gift when He sent forth His Son without sorrow into the world, and He who had given this gift was able also to comfort their hearts, as they would be able to comfort others when they had yielded all to Him.

XVII

CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY

"The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength and skill—"

These were the qualities Wordsworth perceived in his perfect woman. They are qualities, though not all the qualities, which should mark the acts of the Christian who would bear his part worthily. And perhaps even these lines would be improved by transposing the adjectives in the first:

"The reason temperate, the firm will."

For we are coming back to the true exaltation of the will. Neither the man of opinion nor the man of emotion can stand before the man of will. They will long for that which He will do. They

aspire where he performs. "A wish," said South, "is properly the desire of a man sitting or lying still—but an act of the will is a man of business vigorously going about his work." The Christian has the business of his Father to be about, and is following One who went through life doing good, whom the zeal of His Father's house ate up, and whose virile, beneficent life proclaimed as distinctly as His words that He was straitened to work the works of Him that had sent Him while it was day. It will be His will, therefore, to be a man, not of contemplation or of æsthetic taste only, but of strong-willed service of God and man.

This will be one characteristic of the true Christian. He will be a worker for God. He will not excuse himself from spiritual service because he is unfit therefor, for if he is unfit for this, he is unfit to be alive; or because he has felt no divine call thereto, but has been summoned only to some secular service, for he is unfit for such service if he does not take it up in God's fear.

"... Hymns say right,
All service ranks the same with God—
With God, whose puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last or first."

And, just as the warden of the Broad Plain House at Bristol has written, "Consider the pathos of the situation: 'the affliction of the people,' their 'cry.' And then think of God waiting for the sons of men, waiting to use them in the service of man. It sometimes seems still as if He looks and there is none to help, and He wonders that there is none to uphold. Do not let us trouble over our want of gifts. It has been found out that God is always using the most ordinary and unlikely means. The work of the world is steadily being done by men and women whom we should never have dreamed of choosing, but whom God chooses because He finds them willing and ready for His use, humble and in the end confident."

As the Christian man's thought, so also will his conduct be modest. The necessary characteristic of the mightiest serv-

ice is gentleness. No one hears the thunder of the spheres or the irresistible power of the sunbeams. And the true Christian will be still and gentle. "A man that has done a kindness," says Marcus Aurelius, "never proclaims it, but does another as soon as he can, just like a vine that bears again the next season." It is easy to mar the beauty of good deeds and of a busy life by a conscious satisfaction in it and by such speech regarding it as will most effectually deprive it of its attractiveness. The Christian man will spare himself not at all, and will smile at the thought that he is not indolent. And he will be so satisfied with the sense of patient obedience to the will of God that he will not be concerned with the judgment of man, though he will hold himself guiltless of the offenses of heedlessness. He will conduct his life on the principles of the late Archbishop Benson:

"Not to call attention to crowded work or petty fatigues or trivial experiences.

To heal wounds which in times past my cruel or careless hands have made.

To seek no favour, no compassion; to deserve, not ask for, tenderness.

Not to feel any uneasiness when my advice or opinion is not asked, or is set aside."

To teach us something of this the infinite God visibly acted among men in the incarnation and called Himself a lamb. I have a paper written by a Chinese captain, a Christian, on that phrase, "the Lamb of God." "Before I became a Christian," he writes, "I was reading one day the Gospel of John when my attention was arrested by these words. It struck me as absolutely inappropriate to liken the Son of God to a lamb. Man is always willing and ready to worship power, and prefers to bow to the roaring lion and cruel tiger, which have contributed nothing to his advancement, but, on the contrary, filled his heart with awe and terror. On the other hand, the ox, ass and sheep, to which man owes so much of wealth, comfort and civilisation,

are made the emblems of simple and unambitious minds. Not till I became a Christian did the light dawn upon my soul, and revealed to me with force and beauty the depth and richness of meaning that is contained in the word lamb, but of whose significance I was formerly blind. The lamb is meek, gentle, innocent and inoffensive. Jesus, the Son of God, the lamb of the world, the great sacrifice, came not to attract worldly notice and applause, came not to create a noise or to draw admiration. He came to bear all our sins. He came not to strike terror into our hearts or to force admittance, but to soothe the broken-hearted and free the captives. It was with pity, with humility, with sorrow for the world and love for the sinners that He came, casting aside all power and glory, taking upon Himself our sins and guilt, bearing the iniquity of the whole human race. He came to minister, not to be ministered unto."

The Christian will be possessed by the

idea of ministry, of missionary service, and the unselfish beneficences of the Church will be his care and delight, and not less so because he will expect them to be administered with all the skill, faith and ingenuity which man's mind can provide.

Yet into this unselfish ministry this Christian will put all the strength of his will, too. To say that he will be of modest and lowly heart in his acts is not to say that he will be feeble and effeminate. He will care little for himself, and be ready to yield much there, but he will be firm as rock in the service of unselfishness. Nothing is likely to be accomplished there without resolution and everything with it. As an old railroad president said once to his nephew, Mr. Moody's Boston Sunday school teacher, Edward Kimball, "Nothing but Omnipotence can stand in the way of a determined man." And Omnipotence happens to be working with the men of whom we are thinking. It is for Him that they are

living, and having no fear of what man can do to them they can not be loosened of their resolution, least of all by what they know to be valueless and ephemeral.

The Christian must somehow strike the balance, too, between Christian considerateness and courtesy on one side and outspoken and vertebrate disapproval of compromise and contemptible conduct and silliness on the other. Life can become too smooth and human intercourse an opiate. And the conventions of an artificial life may grow so strong as to emasculate character and goggle all human vision. The complaisant ways of society easily glide into treason to personality and into falsehood not less harmful to moral fibre because mutually understood and never admitted to memory. Strong and unselfish, the Christian must above all be true. He can not go away into a desert or a hermit's cell. He must live among men, and do his work there, and yet be a Christian in his kindliness; not hurl himself against what is mean-

ingless, and so destroy his power against what is full of meaning from the devil; and yet also free from all covenant with lies. If some things are difficult and obscure as he tries to do what is right here, some things are easy and plain. The Christian will not rent his property for saloons and then pray for the widow and the fatherless. He will spue the idea of such debauchery out of his mouth. He will not say "yes" when "no" is the truth, and he will be as pitiless of the error as he is pitiful of the erring.

How the true Christian will act will be a matter, not of expediency or of public opinion, or of the conventions of his class, but of principle. And this principle will not be the instinct of his moral judgment or any prescription of his own feelings. It will have heavier sanctions than these. There is an objective standard of right and wrong above us and unalterable by anything we may think or feel. And Christ is this standard. "I am the Way," He said. He who has been

Lord of a certain portion of our thinking must become Lord of the whole, and of the whole of our feeling and acting, too.

The world is already doing what Jesus Himself did—calling those people hypocrites and liars who salute Jesus in the temple as Lord, and in the market places water stocks, and in the courts corrupt justice, and in field and mill oppress the laborer and his little child. From all this the Christian will come out and separate himself and will not find any justification of his continuance in the evil and wrong thereof, in the plea that he can not fight against the organisation of society. He will find it possible to be a Christian in his business, or he will find a way of escaping from the business which, while it may give him the whole world, costs him his own soul.

Against neglect of life's summons as against the perversion of its opportunities, the true Christian will warn his heart, believing in the judgment and recalling the truth which flashed once at

least across the disordered mind of poor James Thompson, condemning himself:

"The selfish, proud and pitiless,
All who have falsified life's royal trust:
The strong whose strength hath basked in idleness;
The great heart given up to worldly lust;
The great mind destitute of moral faith;
Thou scourgest down to Night and utter Death,
Or penal spheres of retribution just."

XVIII

TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK

Some time ago one of the religious papers printed a review of a book entitled "The Leading Idlers of the Gospels." At least one person bought the book on the strength of that review, and was not greatly surprised to find that the proof reader had slipped and that the real title was "The Leading Ideas of the Gospels." The gospel makes no room for drones. The Saviour speaks always of work. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work." "We must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." And at the end of all He declares, "I have glorified Thee on the

earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do."

In this as in other things Jesus is our example. We think sometimes that He was the one son of man to whom God gave a personal and peculiar work. But in receiving a work from God to do, Jesus' lot was like ours, and not alien to the plan of the lives of God's common children. One of the great blessings of His coming lay in His teaching that each of us has a work to do also, directly chosen for us and assigned by our loving Father. "Son," He represents the Father as saying to His sons, "Go work to-day in the vineyard," and He likened the kingdom of heaven to a man going into a far country to sojourn who had given authority to his servants, and to each man his work.

Oftentimes the personal Christian life is supposed to include simply our devotional habits and the inner spiritual emotions and movements of our thought. But the omission of active work and service is fatal. We can not maintain a

true Christian life just for ourselves. God gives us good that we may share it, and the act of sharing it both makes it ours permanently and expands it richly. Our Christian life is intended to be not a meditation, but a ministry.

The work which each Christian is to do is not a chance work chosen at random. It is an assignment, a vocation. Vocation means calling. That is what each Christian's work is intended to be. Each one of us has a work to do and this work is God's work for us. There is great calm and certainty, and there is great strength and power in this truth. "In the morning," says Marcus Aurelius, "when thou art sluggish at rousing thee, let this thought be present, I am rising to do a man's work." We can accept all that comes with perfect peace of mind, and we can know that no power in the universe can overthrow us or make us fail if we find and do God's chosen work. And there is nothing narrow in this thought. God does not assign men alone to what the world re-

gards as professional religious work. "Every art or work, however unimportant it may seem," said John Tauler, seven hundred years ago, "is a gift of God; and all these gifts are bestowed by the Holy Ghost for the profit and welfare of man. Let us begin with the lowest. One can spin, another can make shoes, and some have great aptness for all sorts of outward arts. These are all gifts proceeding from the Spirit of God. If I were not a priest, but were living as a layman, I should take it as a great favor that I knew how to make shoes and should try to make them better than any one else, and should gladly earn my bread by the labor of my hands. There is no work so small, no art so mean, but it all comes from God, and is a special gift of His. Thus let each do that which another can not do so well, and for love, returning gift for gift."

It is restful to think that every day our work is portioned out to us for the day. What we call interruptions may

be even more God's appointments for the day than our carefully prepared projects.

"Father, I do not ask
That Thou wilt choose some other task
And make it mine. I pray
But this: let every day
Be molded still
By Thine own hand; my will
Be only Thine, however deep
I have to bend Thy hand to keep.
Let me not simply do, but be content,
Sure that the little crosses each are sent,
And no mistake can ever be
With Thine own hand to choose for me."

God will not give any man unworthy work. There may be much that is routine in it, but this will not obscure some divine and living purpose. A trade or a profession is good in itself, but God means it to serve also a greater end. It opens ways for a Christian to human hearts and makes it possible for him to do that sort of work that abides after the world and all that is in it have passed away. It is hard to believe, accordingly, that God would call any one just to

make money. Sometimes young men are enticed by this temptation, and excuse themselves from living work on the ground that they will earn money for the kingdom of God. The kingdom can get along without money, but not without life. Jesus called the disciples to be fishers not of money, but of men, and every man now, whatever the occupation by which he earns his support, or more than his support, must be a winner of souls, a shepherd of hearts.

God is eager to point out to each one of us his own peculiar work. Oftentimes conscientious Christians trouble themselves with questionings here. "How shall we discover the will of God?" they ask. First, we must cease looking for some external or magical voice or guidance. God works in our hearts, not over them. It is in us that the Holy Spirit says, "Abba, Father," and in the same way God guides us within our own spirits, so that we can not distinguish His guidance from the motion of our own hearts, but submitting ourselves to Him

may be sure that though He is respecting the integrity of our own personalities, He is still working within them. He rules the world from within. He will probably do the same with our lives.

Second, as Horace Bushnell says, we must exclude certain things that are likely to mislead; the desire to be singular, copying the lives of others, complaint of surroundings, the wish to know everything from the outset.

Thirdly, we must consider the character of God and be sure that God can not assign us any work that is not in harmony with this character. Consider our relation to God as Creator and Lord. We must not do anything that is inconsistent with the relationship of proprietorship and sovereignty.

Consider our own moral judgment. It may be wrong and allow what God condemns, but we must consider it to discover whether it needs amendment. Test it by the law and revelation of God in the Bible and in Jesus Christ, and consider what light this throws upon our path.

We should consult our friends. Perhaps we will have to disregard their advice, perhaps not. Their judgment can never be final. They can not bear our responsibility for us. We have no right to surrender our judgment to them.

We must consult our best Friend. God's providence has been shaping our lives. If we are facing the missionary problem, who brought us face to face with it? Consider the significance of that. It makes it impossible for us to say that if we ought to go, every one ought to go, for every one has not been providentially confronted with it.

Pray, and "when decision and action are necessary, go ahead," as Professor Drummond used to say. "You will not find out until later, probably much later, that you were led at all." For God leads His children who will follow even when they have no consciousness of being led. In this as in other things we walk by faith and not by sight.

This specific work that God gives to each one of us is the thing that we are

to do. Put the emphasis on *do*. "My meat is to *do*," said Jesus. The will of God for us is to be worked at, not merely thought upon. Jesus bids us to labour for the meat that endureth unto eternal life, and when we have it we are to labour in the strength of it. What can not a resolute man or woman do in his or her own strength? Think of Helen Keller. There is said to be a school teacher in Southern Pennsylvania whose hands were blown off by a premature blast at a stone quarry, when he was a boy. To save his life it was necessary to amputate both arms near the elbows. While recovering he read a book on the lives of self-made men, and determined not to give up. He went to school and for fourteen years now he has been teaching successfully. He is an excellent penman, holding the pen between the ends of his arms. He is a good boxer, an accurate marksman, pulling the trigger of his gun by means of a strap held in his teeth. He has been active in politics, and as secretary of two local societies has kept

books which are said to be models of neatness. This was what a man accomplished who resolved to do, and if men in their own strength can do this, what can not a man do in God's strength?

Life is a trifle in comparison with work. "I hold not my life," says Paul, "of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course." Jesus willingly gave His life, letting His body die for the sake of His work. As Samuel Bowles said once, "The man who is not willing to die for his work is not fit to live for it." This is the real mark of greatness, of nobility in men. As Huxley wrote to his friend Donnelly, of Chinese Gordon's death in the Soudan: "Of all the people whom I have met with in my life, he and Darwin are the two in whom I have found something bigger than ordinary humanity—an unequalled simplicity and directness of purpose—a sublime unselfishness. Horrible as it is to us, I imagine that the manner of his death was not unwelcome to himself. Better wear out than rust out, and better

break than wear out." A man has no right to mar his life, but he has still less right to mar his work in order to save his life.

"What are we set on earth for? Say, to toil."

Our Christian life becomes radiant with fresh significance when we conceive it as an agency of God for the accomplishment of some noble, divinely selected end, and an end, too, distinctly original and personal in the case of each of us. We are here to do a specific part of God's work for Him. If we do not do that we miss the first purpose of our life; we hinder, though we can not frustrate, His plans, and we lose our own most splendid privilege of being His fellow workers. Let us not do that. Let us work His work, and do it in the Spirit of the Christ who was straitened till His work was done, and who then could say, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do."

XIX

HOW CHRIST RANKS DUTIES AND INTERESTS

In the eyes of the world the place of primary importance in a man's life belongs to his interest. In the eyes of Christ it belongs to his duty. "Look out for number one," the world says, and number one is each man's self. But self with Christ was number two. He saved others. Himself He could not save. He pleased not Himself. "Looking out for number one" is with men a law of selfishness. "Looking out for number one" was with Christ a law of service. Interest rules men; duty ruled Christ.

The deliberate preference of duty to interest led Christ to waive His rights. He explained to Peter, in connection with the temple tax, that He might have declined payment. "The sons are free,"

He said, "but—" He waived the right to exercise His liberty. And the Incarnation was in itself a gigantic surrender of interest to a divine sense of duty. Having a right to an equality with God, Christ deemed this right a thing not to be jealously retained, but emptied Himself. His right to surrender His rights which constituted His duty He set above His rights which constituted His interest. It is this that makes duty more glorious than interest. It is the assertion of a higher right,—namely, the right to surrender in the interest of others the rights which constitute the interest of self.

And what Jesus set uppermost in His own life was set there, not arbitrarily, but because of principles which require our conformation to the same standard. In the lives of all men He claims for duties a place above interests. To teach men, not rights, but duty, as Mazzini said, "was the work of Jesus. He did not speak of interest to men whose souls were poisoned by the cult of interests. . . . He bent over the decaying world,

and murmured in its ear a word of faith. To that obscene thing which retained nought but the aspect and notions of a man, He uttered words unknown up to that day,—love, self-sacrifice, celestial origin. The dead arose, a new life thrilled through that obscene thing which philosophy had tried in vain to bring to life." Jesus " created for man that theory of duty which is the mother of self-sacrifice, which ever was and ever will be the inspirer of great and noble things,—a sublime theory that draws men near to God, borrows from the Divine nature a spark of omnipotence, crosses at one leap all obstacles, makes the martyr's scaffold a ladder to victory, and is as superior to the narrow, imperfect theory of rights as the law is superior to all of its corollaries."

We are familiar with the principle of the exaltation of duty over interest under the terms of the law of self-renunciation, the abandonment of material interest for no material return. The mis-

sionary is obeying this law when he leaves congenial associations, and a comfortable climate and home, to bury himself among peoples whose life and surroundings deny him any compensation in kind for the material interests he has abandoned. But though the law of self-sacrifice simply demands that duty be given its just supremacy over interest, we are accustomed to regard it as having a touch of the supererogatory. It is good, therefore, occasionally to drop the word out of view, and to state its truth in the terms of duty and interest. There is no supererogation about duty. Sometimes we act as though there were. A soldier or a public servant does his duty in some conspicuous trial, and at once some special reward is proposed, or some extra remuneration, as though what the man did could not naturally have been expected from him. The risk of appearing ungrateful at such times is less than the risk of demoralising high and stern notions of duty. What a man ought to do, he ought to do. He

deserves no praise for doing it. He would merit condemnation for anything else. As Fielding says:

"When I'm not thank'd at all, I'm thank'd enough;
I've done my duty, and I've done no more."

Jesus' view of duty was above all our lax, disintegrating sentimentalism. "When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do."

If doing his duty is the least that can be expected of a man, how far beneath contempt is the course of those who exalt their interest above their duty! Sometimes this interest is purely selfish and malevolent, in that it depends on injuring others and defeating their interests. In such cases, to seek it is diabolical. Sometimes it is apparently innocent, a man's interest not clashing with the contrary interest of other men. In such cases, to seek it may be only folly,—a man's sur-

render of the best to the mediocre in himself. Evil or innocent, no other principle is ever to displace the principle of duty. Arnold of Rugby declared the spirit of chivalry a hateful and anti-Christian thing, because it did this and "fostered a sense of honor rather than a sense of duty." Sometimes the spirit of love is exalted as superior to the sense of duty; but the conflict is forced and unnatural, for the spirit of love issues in the spirit of duty, and the spirit of duty is evidence of the spirit of love.

The personal life and the national policy founded on interest are essentially weak. They can not support themselves against the sweep of the moral laws of God. The peril in the dealings of Western nations with Asia lies in this. They are prone to guide themselves by their own interest rather than by their duty toward the Eastern people. Chang Chih Tung justly complains of such a course, and objects to the idea that there can be rights without duties. And in each state,

church, family, or association, real stability and content depend on the supremacy of duty.

The surrender of interest to duty is the very glory and joy of life. This is the lesson of Ugo Bassi's sermon:

"Measure thy life by loss instead of gain,
Not by the wine drunk, but the wine poured forth,
For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice."

And this was one of Paley's teachings: "No man's spirits ever were hurt by doing his duty; on the contrary, one good action, one temptation resisted and overcome, one sacrifice of desire or interest purely for conscience's sake, will prove a cordial for weak and low spirits far beyond what either indulgence or diversion or company can do for them." That man has missed a great joy who has not learned to guide his life, not according to interests or rights, but according to duties, and to rest all his ways and will on the impregnable rock, "I ought." And

duty done even without reward is better far than interest sought with the success of fame or gain. Those are the best days in which this is most clearly recognised:

"When service sweats for duty, not for meed."

Of course, it is the blessed paradox of the gospel that our duties are our interests, and that whoever gives up his interest for his duty, serves his interest in the noblest sense. It is true of the Christian, as Bishop Wilkins said, that "nothing is properly his duty but what is really his interest." It is our interest to save our lives. But whoever would save his life shall lose it. It is our duty to lose our lives. And whoever loses his life shall find it. We spurn our interest and do our duty, and, lo! at the end of our duty our interest is awaiting us. We spurn our duty and seek our interest, and lose both. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die," said Jesus, "it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit."

Our interests are our rights, as men view them. But the divine gift of duty is in its essence a right transcending these rights; the right, namely, to surrender all our lower rights, to scorn our interests, to empty ourselves of them as our Lord did, and so to win and wear through the renunciation of self the coronal of Christ, who, though He was rich, became poor; though He was the Son of the God of all, came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

"I slept and dreamed that life was Beauty,
I woke, and found that life was Duty.
Was thy dream, then, a shadowy lie?
Toil on, poor heart, unceasingly,
And thou shalt find thy dream to be
A truth and noonday light to thee."

XX

CHRISTIANITY A TRUST

Two views prevail in the Christian Church as to the nature of our gospel. Some hold it to be the beneficent gift of the generous God. So believing, I should say, "This good gospel is mine. With all its ample grace and enfolding mercy, it is my own. The attitude of others toward it, or their ignorance of it, are but secondary and unimportant in comparison with its significance to me and the pleasing sense of my possession of its boundless breadth and blessing." As the beginning of a true view of our gospel one might pardon this, but perhaps any man might be allowed humbly but boldly to denounce it as a conclusive judgment. For our gospel is less a beneficent gift of a generous God than a solemn trust

of a just Father whose love is equal and whose thought embraces all.

Whether one regard Christianity as a gift or as a trust, is more than a matter of term or of theoretic distinction. It is vitally determinative of all conduct and character. Viewing the gospel as a gift either to the individual believer or to the corporate Church is to sow the seed of that personal selfishness and proprietary exclusiveness of grace of which we have already reaped a too lamentable harvest, and against which much of the blind socialistic movement and the irreligious groping after brotherhood of our day is the pathetic protest. We have passed by the time when any true man, desiring to be of service to his day, can take this Judas attitude of isolation and personal selfishness. As an old and powerful writer of the Church of England, prophesying before his time, has said, "Before any man can now leave an impress upon his age, the unhappiness of his brethren must first make him grave."

Christianity is a trust. The Christian is a steward. A dispensation of the gospel has been committed to him, and it is required of him that he should be found faithful. The essence of the gospel is not a written record or ceremony of any sort whatsoever, however holy and necessary its historical statements and forms. The essence of the gospel is the reception of a divine trust of truth and love and life by a man in behalf of his fellow-men. "The Office of Teaching or Preaching the gospel," says Frederick Myers, whom I have quoted, "belongs to men, not to a Book; to the Church emphatically; though not to the clergy only, but to every member of it; for a dispensation of the gospel is committed to every Christian, and woe unto him if he preach not the gospel." The shame of an eternal dishonor and malfeasance is on the man who views the gospel not as a trust but as a personal possession.

Our gospel is as broad as the tender-

ness of God. In the wideness of His mercy, there is the wideness of the sea. As Trench wrote:

> "I say to thee, do thou repeat
> To the first man thou may'st meet,
> In highway, lane, or open street,
> That he and we and all men move
> Under a canopy of love,
> As broad as God's blue heaven above."

The gift of such love, viewed as a gift only, may be sweet. It may more likely turn to ashes in the hand, like the apples of Lake Asphaltes. But viewed as a trust for the blessing of our brethren, the reception of such love is the missionary summons of the Lowly Person who is our King and who left one clear command: "Go, share it with others."

And this is a summons not to clergy alone, but to every one of Christ's brethren. As Myers wrote in his noble "Catholic Thoughts on the Church of Christ and the Church of England":

"A man that feels himself to have re-

ceived an unspeakable gift from One who permits and commands him to offer the like to every man he meets, surely he is precisely the person who will be most zealous to win his brethren to know and to love his benefactor. Philosophy was not and is not proselytising, because it is proud, and because it does not and it can not teach men to love: it constitutes but a caste, or a school, or a sect; and such do not like to be enlarged, for thereby the distinction of each of their members is diminished. But Christianity is more than this—it is a society, a fellowship, a brotherhood; and the charter of its incorporation contains a command for its extension; the very end of its existence is the conversion of the world to communion with itself. Christianity is the world's leaven; it is a growing Light; it is a diffusive Love; and each member of the Christian Church is called to be a herald and a preacher of its faith. The love of Christ constrains him; that with which he is baptised is as fire, and

will burn, and burning it will enlighten and inflame. A man who has felt the blessing of the gospel in his own soul can not but be anxious to impart it to his brethren. In every Christian heart, be assured, Christianity will find a new missionary, and, if needs be, a new martyr."

And may it not be said, without risk of misunderstanding, that no true gentleman can allow himself to be open to the suspicion of breach of trust? In one of his journals David Livingstone wrote of feeling "much turmoil of spirit in view of having all my plans for the welfare of this great region and teeming population knocked on the head by savages to-morrow." Then the thought of the Saviour's chivalry came to him, and he wrote: "But I read that Jesus came and said, 'All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, and lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.' It is the word of a gentleman of the most sacred and strictest honour, and there's an

end on't." A gentleman of the most sacred and strictest honour was He, and His disciples dare not be less. To play with a trust as a trivial thing is to cease to be the kind of gentleman that He was, and to show the sense of honour He showed.

And this trust is a trust for all the men of the Master's brotherhood. There are vessels of gold and silver in His house, but there is no vessel unappointed to service, and both the preservation and extension of His gospel are dependent upon the free discharge of service by all. No gifted class can perform a vicarious sacrifice, as no privileged class is endowed with exclusive privilege. Each man of us has his trust and his work, and perhaps neither our Lord nor His Church nor His world could endure our disloyalty. For, once again, as the good man I have quoted wrote, "The way in which the gospel would seem to be intended to be alike preserved and perpetuated on earth is, not by its being jealously

guarded by a chosen order and cautiously communicated to a precious few, but by being so widely scattered and so thickly sown that it shall be impossible, from the very extent of its spreading merely, to be rooted up. It was designed to be not as a Perpetual Fire in the temple, to be tended with jealous assiduity and to be fed only with special oil; but rather as a shining and burning light, to be set up on every hill, which should blaze the broader and the brighter in the breeze, and go on so spreading over the surrounding territory as that nothing of this world should ever be able to extinguish or to conceal it."

When Paul said in his last Epistle, when the time of his departure was come, "I have kept the faith," he meant that he had given it away, that he had viewed his acceptance of it not as an endowment of personal privilege, but as a holy trust, and he besought Timothy that he should keep that which was committed to his trust in the same way. There is no other way in which to keep the trust of

God. For the trust of God is the duty of service. It was thus with Christ, even to the bitterness of the cross. And

"It was well, and Thou hast said in season,
'As is the Master shall the servant be':
Let me not subtly slide into the treason,
Seeking an honour which they gave not Thee.

"Never at even, pillowed on a pleasure,
Sleep with the wings of aspiration furled;
Hide the last mite of the forbidden treasure,
Keep for my joys a world within the world."

XXI

OUR FATHER GOD

One of the most precious services rendered by Jesus was His revelation of the father heart in God. Of course the thought was not unknown during the Old Dispensation. "A father of the fatherless," David calls the Lord. "Thou art my father," exclaims he or another Psalmist. And Israel pillowed its head upon the assurance.

"Like as a father pitieth his children
So the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

And God had invited men to speak to Him as children. "Ye shall call Me, My Father." Jer. iii. 19. But these ideas of God's fatherhood rested upon the old conception of the father's place in the family. The emphasis was not on tender sympathy and love, but upon authority and

dependence. "O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay and Thou our Father; and we all are the work of Thine hand."

But Jesus not only laid bare the truth of God's fatherliness, but also revealed thus what true fatherhood is, and both changed our conception of God and exalted our notion of fatherhood. He did this by opening to us His own inner life of relationship to God. He called and conceived God as His Father. He laid the emphasis not upon God's creative power, or His almighty sovereignty over human life, although these are just conceptions of God, but upon His loving fatherly relations. "My Father," are His words, or simply "Father." This is almost the only title of address Jesus used. It was never "O infinite One," or "O ruler and preserver of all things," or "O great and eternal God," but just "Father."

"I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and understanding and

hast revealed them unto babes." Matt. xi: 25.

"Father, what shall I say? Save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father glorify Thy name." John xi: 27.

"Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." John xvii: 5.

"O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me." Matt. xxvi: 39.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke xxiii: 34.

"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Luke xxiii: 46.

As might be pointed out in connection with Jesus' habits of prayer, it is this very intimacy of relationship which adds such a spirit of reverence to Jesus' life. Sometimes He prefixed an adjective—as "Holy Father." "Righteous Father," but He does not, as we too often do, exalt the attribute above the Father. It is not so much the justice of the Father that is in Jesus' mind as the fatherliness

of the justice. It is the person, not the quality.

And all Jesus' life and will were subject to this dear Father. "He that sent Me is with Me. The Father hath not left Me alone, for I do always those things that please Him." John viii: 28. The very deeds that He did, Jesus said He did because He had seen the Father doing them. "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father doing; for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner." John v: 19. In our own homes we constantly see little boys doing what their fathers have been doing. Sometimes they do these things just because they are their fathers, in miniature, and their fathers' spirit is in them, and sometimes they do them because they have seen their fathers do them, and nothing will satisfy them until they have done "just as father has done." Jesus said that He was His Father's own Child in this matter, and that He did what He saw His Father doing. John viii: 38. But it was also

the Father's own nature in Him reproducing itself. "The words that I say unto you I speak not from Myself," He said, "but the Father abiding in Me, doeth His works." John xiv: 10; viii: 28.

This went so far with Jesus that He could truly say that His life and His Father's were identical, so that the man who saw Him saw the Father. John xiv: 9. The man who honoured Him honoured the Father. John v: 23. The man who loved Him loved the Father. John viii: 42. "I and the Father are one," He declared. John x: 30. It was this that aroused the bitter enmity of the Jews. John x: 31. The most precious part of Jesus' message, that perfect atonement between the Father and His children which Jesus came to reveal in His life, and to accomplish for us in His death, was the thing which men who thrust the loving, Fatherly God away from them most disliked. It was blasphemy, they said. John x: 33. Jesus' stern reply was that the spirit that called

this blasphemy was the very spirit of hell, for it antagonised that other spirit of sweet trust and companionship which is the spirit of the kingdom of heaven. Mark iii: 29, 30.

Now what the Father was to Jesus He would be to me. Each one of us may joyfully say this. My Father knows my needs before I ask Him. "Your Father knoweth," said Jesus. Matt. vi: 8. He knows because He cares, and He cares more than we can care. Do you think that the little child lying sick and suffering in its mother's arms, tossing wearily, suffers as much from its pain as the helpless and agonising mother suffers? We never suffer as much in our own sufferings as in the sufferings of those we love. They are more to us than we are to ourselves. But God is a truer Father and a truer friend than we can be. He knows and He cares with a solicitude greater than we can know. Oh, let us think of Him, not as the sovereign God only, but as our dear Father.

And His knowledge leads to ministry

as well as sympathy. "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him?" Matt. vii: 2. How often we have been impatient because God seemed to be withholding from us some good thing that we desired! But what God withholds from us, while it may be a good thing in itself, is not a good thing for us. No one of us has ever desired what was truly good for us with anything like the eagerness, the anxiety, the solicitude with which our Father has been striving to give us that good thing.

And the Father has a plan and a will for the life of each one of His children. Matt. vii: 21; x: 29. If this were not true, life would be a very insipid thing, or a thing exciting only because of its lawless peril. But He who alone knows enough and cares enough to do it, has planned out every human life, desiring the noblest things for it, fitting it into the

richest associations, disciplining it for an eternal service of glory. The worst folly to be found in the world is the folly of scorning the wisdom of the thoughtful Father who knows what we are here for, and who would make the most of each one of His children.

My Father will keep me in perfect safety. "My Father," said Jesus, "which hath given My sheep unto Me is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." John x: 29.

"Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand,
Never foe can follow, never traitor stand.
Not a shade of worry, not a touch of care,
Not a blast of hurry, reach the spirit there."

Or if some sorrow should come, the Father's own protecting hand offers comfort and will wipe away every tear from our eyes. Rev. xxi: 4.

If God is our own Father let us love Him more and trust Him more and please Him more. "I do always," said Jesus,

"those things that please Him." Even the perfect God who needs nothing can be pleased by His children, or displeased. All impatience in your home, every harsh or fretful word to little children, each prurient thought or wrong desire or unkind judgment are unpleasant to God and grieve Him, while He derives real pleasure from every gentle and loving word, every bold stroke at sin, every brave attempt to suppress what is unclean and unworthy in us or in the world. We have the encouragement of Jesus in thinking of God as truly our Father,—to be talked to and consulted with, to help and to be helped by, as truly as any earthly father. It is wonderful, and it is wonderfully good.

"Thou God of might,
Infinite wisdom, and unmeasured, matchless power,
Whose mindful care and all-creative skill
Can speak a universe to life or clothe a flower,
Omnipotent, omniscient and all-present,—still—
My Father!

"Thou God of justice
Who holdest out the balances of sternest law,
Who will remember virtues well, nor vice forget,
Who canst not pass the slightest fault or flaw,
Immutable, austere, and just,—and yet—
My Father!

"Thou God of love,—
How deeper than the ocean depth and strong as death,—
That gave His only Son a sacrifice for me,
How tender as a mother's whispering breath,—
O God of mercy, Thou wilt ever be
My Father!

XXII

THE HOLY SPIRIT

EVERYTHING done in us or through us that pleases God is the work of the Holy Spirit. "No man can say Jesus is Lord," says Paul, "but in the Holy Spirit." I Cor. xii: 3. And every time we call God Father it is the Holy Spirit in us whispering that dear name. Gal. iv: 6. Christians often forget this, and sometimes think that they do not know the Holy Spirit. The Corinthian Christians forgot it. "Know ye not," Paul asks them, "that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" I Cor. iii: 16. All our qualities and capacities are gifts of the Holy Spirit, whatsoever they may be. I Cor. xii: 4-11. We are mistaken, therefore, if we think that we can be Christians and not know the Holy Spirit.

For it is God's Spirit that has quickened us into life. The least interest in the Holy Spirit is evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work in us. And if we now truly love God and are following His Son, it is the Holy Spirit who has wrought these things in us. "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit," Jesus told Nicodemus, "he can not enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John iii: 5, 6. Each one of us who is now alive in Christ was made alive by the Holy Spirit. We may not have known when He did it or have been conscious at all that it was He who did it. But neither did we know when our physical life began, nor have we any consciousness whatever of how it came to be. As our physical life sprang without our consciousness from other life so our spiritual life sprang from God, born of the Holy Spirit. As we look back now into that old world we see the difference, as wide as between life and death and we can thank the good Spirit

of God for having brought us hither, and understand now, that but for Him we should never have come over. But we did not know that it was He who was bringing us. Those who are now coming or waiting to come do not need to see Him or know Him. All they need to do is to come over. When they get across they will realise who it was that brought them.

As it is the Holy Spirit who brings men into the Christian life, so it is He who satisfies them there. This was the lesson taught to the woman by Jacob's well. The Father is seeking for true worshippers who will worship Him in Spirit, for He is a Spirit, and in such worshippers a well of living water will be opened, springing up unto eternal life. John iv: 14, 23. And more than this, out of the very depths of the lives of such men the Holy Spirit will pour streams of living water to bless and enrich others. John vii: 37-39. But here once again the Holy Spirit may do His work without recognition. Every word spoken for

Jesus, every truly loving act the Holy Spirit prompts, and conceals Himself behind the good work He has done. He obeys more perfectly than any one else in the universe Jesus' commands, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. v: 6.

We can see this unique characteristic of the Holy Spirit, His complete self-effacement, in Jesus' words about Him. "The Holy Spirit," He told His disciples, "whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you. . . . He shall bear witness of Me. . . . He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak. . . . He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine and shall declare it unto you." John xiv: 26; xv: 26; xvi: 13, 14. The Holy Spirit is not here to exalt Himself, to impress Himself upon our consciousness and experience. He is here to fix our attention and gaze not upon Himself but

upon the words and the face of Christ, and to impress Christ upon us and make us like Him. The evidence of His presence, therefore, is not disordered and thaumaturgical commotions in us, strange, unintelligible impulses, unreasoned caprices and moods, but a noble love of Jesus, a memory quick to recall what Jesus said, an imagination before which Jesus lives again, a deep longing to be like Him, and in due time a still and transforming sense of His companionship.

The Holy Spirit is not unreal because we do not see Him and because He hides Himself behind Christ. A friend asks me to do a hard service. I do it. Why? What was it that led to the doing of the hard thing? Was it the spoken request, the undulation of the atmosphere between us by which the sound from his lips came to my ear? Not at all. It was my friend's influence within my will. The sound did not do it. My friend did it in me. If I had known he wanted it done it would have been done without any

verbal request. It is intangible influence that moulds us even among friends. Well, wipe out the limitations imposed by the material world and it is not impossible to understand how the Holy Spirit does what He does with us. And just as I did what my friend wanted done, and yet not I but he in me, so I do what the Holy Spirit wants done, and yet not I but He in me. We do not need to worry ourselves about Him, with questions as to our relation to Him, such as, Have I been baptized with the Spirit? Have I been filled with the Spirit? What we need to do is to look steadfastly upon the face of Christ and do His will, and in proportion as we see His face clearly and do His will sincerely and completely we may know that the Holy Spirit is filling us and gaining true sovereignty over our lives.

In the New Testament much is said justifying the assertion of the inseparable relationship between the Holy Spirit and Christ. John suggests it significantly in his comment on Jesus' words on the last day of the Feast of the Tabernacles.

"This spoke He," remarks John, "of the Spirit which they that believed on Him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." John vii: 39. Both these things are true: as Jesus is glorified the Holy Spirit comes; as the Holy Spirit comes Jesus is glorified. If Jesus went away as He said He did, that the Spirit might come (John xvi: 7) the Spirit has come that Jesus may not be away from us, but so near us as to be in us and reigning over us. We do wrong if we divorce the mystery of the Holy Spirit from the historic life and the present personality of Christ.

The life in which the Holy Spirit is working will be a life of purity and of freedom. The union which He establishes between Christ and us is a union of spirit (I Cor. vii: 17), making impossible to us whatever is impossible to Christ. He begets in us His own mind, and the life and peace resident in it (Rom. viii: 6) and produces when the full time of fruitage has come His own characteristic re-

sults. Gal. v: 22, 23. Chains that no one else can break He breaks and creates for us a real liberty. II Cor. iii: 17. It is the Holy Spirit, in a word, who realises for us and in us the whole loving purpose of God, and who bids us in return to look on the sweet face of Christ and thank Him, and asks only to be given free course in us to do yet more and greater things for us.

The thought of the love of Christ is familiar to us. We scarcely ever think of the love of the Holy Spirit, and yet Christ's is the only love that can equal it. "Greater love hath no man than this," He said, "that a man should lay down his life for his friends." But what shall we say of a laying down of life for friends that is also a laying down of life in friends? For the Spirit of God in working for us must work in us,—down among the unsightly ideals, the evil imaginings, the sinful desires, the debased tastes. There in the dark and death and disease of the soul the pure and Holy Spirit must go to live with what it ab-

hors, to struggle with it in the night, to wage relentless and unresting war against all that exalts itself against God and the divine destinies of man. This is not one great sacrifice after which all is over. It is a perpetual service, a perpetual sacrifice. As we think of what He is doing in us let us cease to grieve and resist Him. For the Spirit of God, make room, make room.

XXIII

PAST AND FUTURE

THE intimation of immortality is in our restless reluctance to let the past and the future alone. What have we to do with them? We can not call back one moment from the past or hasten by the fraction of a second the coming days. And yet we live most of our life in one or the other, and refuse to accept confinement to the moment that is present with us. There is in us an undefined sense of supremacy over time, a consciousness of eternal interest. What was and what will be we feel are alike ours.

And in every Christian heart this feeling is a right feeling. The past is ours. It holds for us the record of the earthly life of Christ and the salvation that He wrought out for men. That would be

enough to redeem the past. The time in which Christ came, which gave Him room for His words and ways has a right to live in our hearts. And the past holds the evidences of God's unfailing love. It is itself the evidence of His fatherly education of mankind. Ten thousand noble acts of sacrifice, the birth of friendships, moral victories, great expansions of strength and vision—the past is full of these things. The very gift of memory is proof that God means us to recall what is gone. He enjoined upon Israel the recital of His great works from generation to generation, and He established institutions to be the perpetual memorial of His goodness. If we are not to live in the past, the past is yet to live on with us.

"The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction."

But there are things in the past which we do not want to have live on with us. If it holds the records of our victories, it

holds also the records of our defeats. Our sins were in it and it is dark with failure. And we have no right to keep these and carry them on with us into the future. These were the things behind that Paul forgot. And we have our own duty of forgetfulness, too. "Thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth," says the prophet. Isa. liv: 4. And God promises that He too, will forget, and remember our sins no more. Jer. xxxi: 34. Let us let these things go. They have served their purpose if they have thrown us more trustfully upon the strength that alone can guard us henceforth from stumbling. If they have done that let them and the time that holds them go.

"My soul is sailing through the sea,
But the Past is heavy and hindereth me.
The Past hath crusted cumbrous shells
That hold the flesh of cold sea-mells
About my soul.
The huge waves wash, the high waves roll
Each barnacle clingeth and worketh dole
And hindereth me from sailing!

"Old Past let go, and drop i' the sea
Till fathomless waters cover thee!
For I am living but thou art dead;
Thou drawest back, I strive ahead
The Day to find.
Thy shells unbind! Night comes behind,
I needs must hurry with the wind,
And trim me best for sailing."

There are some, however, who are more fearful about the future than about the past. They long for "the good old times" and lament each departure from ancient ways. Their golden age is behind them, and the shadows fall darkly across the forward days. But this is slavery, and we are free. The Spirit of the good God came to deliver us from this as well as other bondage. The "things to come" are ours. I Cor. iii: 22. Wherever in space or in time we are borne we have nothing to fear.

"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air,
I only know I can not drift
Beyond His love and care."

The rapid changes that are passing over the world, shaking the old things until we know not what is established, can not shake the truth that the Lord God holds all changes in His hand and that they are to Him but little things. Christians, above all young Christians, should not be timid. They should leap with exhilaration of life into the movements by which the present Spirit of the living God is preparing better things for the world.

And we may believe this of our own lives as truly as of the world. The future holds nothing dreadful for us. We may face it with a sunny smile and smile on still even when the play of life becomes stern and severe and we feel like the grape no longer flush and full on the vine in the sun but crushed in the wine press. It is for good. Or

> "Note that Potter's wheel,
> That metaphor!
>
> . . . . . .

"What though the earlier grooves
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Scull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

"Look not thou down—but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needs't thou with earth's wheel?"

And even death is a trifle. We may not wish to put it as Swift did, that "it is impossible that anything so natural, so necessary, and so universal as death should ever have been designed as an evil to mankind," but we can say that all the evil of death has been abolished for us by Jesus Christ our Lord and that we have not the slightest fear of it. Just beyond it Christ is waiting for us.

And some day a generation will come which Christ will meet this side of death.

We have a right to watch for Him as though that generation were our own. That is the best thing about the future: Christ will come in it, even as the best thing about the past is that in it Christ came. Our Christian lives are incomplete if they lack this hope of Christ's return, "the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus ii: 13. The early Christians found in it incentive to holiness, to purity, to diligence, to soberness, to activity and with it they comforted their hearts. What it was to them it can be to us. "Be ye also ready, for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." Matt. xxiv: 44. "And now little children abide in Him that if He shall be manifested, we may have boldness and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." I John ii: 28.

And that is the best way to prepare for the future and also to crown the past, namely, to live right in the present. "If we examine our thoughts," says Pascal, "we shall find them always occupied

with the past or the future. We scarcely think of the present, and if we do so, it is only that we may borrow light from it to direct the future. The present is never our end; the past and present are our means, the future alone is our end. Thus we never live but hope to live." But we never shall live if we do not live. Those are ready to meet the Lord when He comes who are watching before He comes and they go in to His marriage supper.

Is my lamp now trimmed and filled with oil and are my loins now girt? Am I now like unto a man who is waiting for his Lord? If I would live with Christ in the life that is to be, Christ must live with me in the life that now is. If I would "appear with Him in glory" I must be able to describe Him here as Paul did, "Christ my life." Col. iii: 14. If for me to die is to be gain, then to me to live must be Christ. Phil. i: 21.

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